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DIDO AND AND HENRY PURCELL

Edited and arranged by EDWARD J. DENT

VOCAL SCORE

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DIDO AND AENEAS

An Opera by
HENRY PURCELL

newly edited by EDWARD J. DENT

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
44 Conduit Street, London, W. 1



PREFACE

HE researches of Mr W. Barclay Squire, to whose learning and enthusiasm all students of Purcell are profoundly indebted, have clearly established that the opera 'Dido and Aeneas' was composed and first performed about the year 1689. The first production took place at a school for girls kept by Josias Priest in Chelsea, the work having been expressly written and composed for his pupils. Singing, dancing, and acting were in those days important items in the education of both boys and girls in English schools; even during the Commonwealth, when the public theatres were closed, there seems to have been no objection made to dramatic and musical performances of this kind. Priest, like various other schoolmasters, was a dancing-master, and closely connected with the theatres. As far as is known, the opera was never put on the stage again until 1895, when the bicentenary of the composer's death was celebrated by a performance given by students of the Royal College of Music under the direction of the late Sir Charles Stanford.

Nothing positive is known about the details of the original performance beyond the fact that a prologue by Thomas D'Urfey was spoken by one of the pupils at Priest's school, Lady Dorothy Burke. It has been suggested that Purcell himself took one of the parts, but it is much more probable that he directed the performance at the harpsichord in accordance with the usual custom of the time. It is clear from the earliest and most complete manuscript score of the work that all the characters except Aeneas were probably represented by girls of the school, and that other pupils sang the treble parts of the choruses. The alto, tenor, and bass parts of the choruses were probably sung by men from outside, perhaps lay-clerks from Westminster Abbey or singers from a theatre. The part of Aeneas is written in the tenor clef, all the other solo parts being written in the treble clef, and it differs notably from the other chief parts in that Aeneas has not a single song, his part being entirely limited to recitative.

Dido and Aeneas' has sometimes been described as the first English opera. This is not strictly true; it is not even true to say that it was the first English opera which was sung from beginning to end. The first English opera was 'The Siege of Rhodes' (1656), of which not a note of the music has survived. The next important landmark in English operatic history is 'Psyche' (1673), by Thomas Shadwell and Matthew Locke, in which the action is carried on partly in music and partly in spoken dialogue. The first English musical drama which was all sung was 'Venus and Adonis', by John Blow. This work, which is described as a masque, is in reality a complete opera. It was performed privately at the Court of Charles II; its date cannot be settled accurately, but it was probably given a few years before 'Dido and Aeneas'. A comparison of the two works shows clearly

that Purcell took Blow's opera as a model for his own.

Since 1895 'Dido and Aeneas' has had several performances, chiefly by amateurs, which have proved that even when represented with the humblest resources Purcell's music has a dramatic poignancy and beauty which is not surpassed, if indeed it even be equalled, in the more famous works of Gluck. It is pre-eminently a work for the stage, and its full force can only be experienced in dramatic representation.

During the period that elapsed between the first and its second performances, 'Dido and Aeneas' was occasionally given as a cantata. Early in

the eighteenth century a concert version was made of the score, and owing to the fact that the autograph manuscript disappeared at a very early date, and that the earliest manuscript now known was apparently lost until about the middle of the nineteenth century, considerable confusion has taken place. Several manuscripts exist of the eighteenth-century concert version, in which the dramatic dances and some of the finest recitatives were omitted, the solo parts re-arranged for voices of different and often unsuitable kinds, and the whole of the music subjected to a revision in order to bring Purcell's melody and harmony more into line with that of Handel and his contemporaries. It was this concert version that was printed by the Musical Antiquarian Society in 1841, and this edition formed the basis of the edition brought out by the late Dr W. H. Cummings in 1887, in vocal score and in full score, as one of the Purcell Society's volumes, in 1889. Dr Cummings had fortunately discovered a much earlier manuscript of the opera in the library of Sir Frederick Ouseley, now at St Michael's College, Tenbury, and was able to supply from this source the missing numbers. Dr Cummings's intimate knowledge of Purcell's style and his own artistic intuition further led him to restore, on the basis of the Tenbury manuscript, several characteristic turns of phrase which the eighteenth-century revisers had altered to suit their own taste. But he seems to have overrated the value of the concert version, perhaps because at the time when he edited the opera there was little or no idea of its ever being put on the stage again, and hardly did justice to his own artistic judgment.

The present edition is the result of a fresh collation of the available manuscripts. A manuscript score which was in Dr Cummings's own possession cannot now be traced, but the separate parts of which he speaks in his preface have been placed at my disposal by the kindness of his son, Mr Arthur Cummings, to whom I take this opportunity of expressing my warmest thanks. These parts represent the concert version. The Tenbury score, for permission to use which I desire to thank the authorities of St Michael's College, is the main authority for the present edition. In preparing it I have always kept the stage in view, and have therefore been glad to restore various small passages which serve to join one movement on to the next without break, as well as many very characteristic peculiarities of melody, harmony, or rhythm. The pianoforte part here printed is a simple transcription of Purcell's string parts where the strings are employed; it also incorporates considerable portions of a new harpsichord part founded on Purcell's bass, which for the most part is without any figures. This harpsichord part has been treated with considerable freedom in view of stage performance, but no alteration of the original harmony has been made. In the air and chorus, 'Thanks to these lonesome vales' (Act II), I have followed Dr Cummings in alternating the solo and chorus; in the manuscript the solo is first sung in its entirety and the chorus then repeats it, as in several other cases. To Herr Hermann Scherchen of Frankfurt I am indebted for the ingenious suggestion that the next air, 'Oft she visits', might be appropriately and conveniently assigned to Dido instead of to an 'Attendant' who takes no further part in the drama.

In preparing this edition of 'Dido and Aeneas' I have been greatly

indebted to the kind help of Mr Gerald Cooper.

EDWARD J. DENT

DIDO AND AENEAS

A few suggestions are here offered to schools and amateur societies. The general scheme of production must depend on local resources and producers can use these suggestions as they think fit. Attention is also drawn to a few special musical difficulties.

Costumes. Classical are cheapest and easiest; purely fantastic and imaginary (no period) might be effective if good; the most appropriate are 17th century—the heroic figures with plumes and helmets ('baroque-classical') and courtiers in Charles II dresses. Witches, etc., must not be supernatural-looking; the chorus of witches (including the three soloists) are the same people as those who sing with the sailors in the last act—the slum population of the harbour at Carthage. The men should be beggars in rags, madmen, cripples, deformities, etc., and the women, young and old, as disreputable as possible.

In the second scene they should be so lighted as to look more fantastic. There is no need to dress the whole chorus as sailors in Scene 4; the

solo singer and the dancers are sufficient as a minimum.

CHORUS. It is best to divide the chorus into two separate groups. Group I sing courtiers in Scenes 1 and 3. Group II sing witches and crowd in Scenes 2 and 4. This saves changing dresses. Group I sing the echo behind the scenes in Scene 2. In the last part of Scene 4 both groups should join to sing 'Great minds' and 'With drooping wings'.

DANCERS. If possible have a number of people who dance and do not sing. They will be wanted in all the scenes. Time in changing dresses will be saved if the dancers can be divided into two groups like the singers.

Scene 1.—Dido's Court. Dido is completely serious and sincere. The chorus are worldly and frivolous, polite and affected. Belinda is half-way between the two, sometimes spokeswoman of the chorus, at other times (Scene 4) Dido's faithful friend.

Dido sits dejected while Belinda tries to cheer her. This scene rather

quiet in style.

Song. Dido leaves her chair and comes down to front, talking to Belinda and ignoring chorus. Ends sitting; Belinda rather behind her chair consoling her; during final symphony for violins Dido should express emotion corresponding to musical climax (high Ab of violin).

Recit. At change to quick time Belinda turns towards chorus explaining to them the political advantage of a marriage between Dido and Aeneas. Chorus responds with joy at the prospect of a royal wedding and all the festivities. This chorus must sound very cheerful in spite of the minor key.

Recit. All this is one piece of music, and like all Purcell's recitatives must be sung on a basis of strict time; but once the strict rhythm is secured, all sorts of liberties within it can be taken.

'Fear no danger'. This can be shortened if necessary; but at full length it affords great opportunities for a procession of Aeneas and suite. They may bring gifts to Dido. Dancing women leading them on; very small children as Cupids; men with spears in the background.

By the end of the chorus Aeneas should be kneeling before Dido.

Recit., 'See, see your royal guest'. Belinda must sing this and similar phrases as if she were blowing a call on a trumpet—strict time and rather hard, brilliant tone.

Aeneas rises. He and Dido gaze fondly at each other.

'Cupid only'. Softly and almost whispered; court gossip. Chorus frivolous and amused amongst themselves.

Aeneas more impassioned; Dido still controlling her feelings.

Chorus, 'To the Hills'. Here chorus take the foreground. Dido may lead Aeneas in stately fashion to another part of the stage where he can sit by her. At 'Go revel' the Cupids may dance before Dido and Aeneas, and throughout the chorus there should be movements, especially where the singers rest.

The Triumphing Dance is effective with men with spears leading the rest to the hunting party; at the end they come up to Dido and Aeneas, who rise suddenly, take their spears, and follow the rest off the stage with striding and resolute steps, as if they had suddenly made up their minds.

All the choruses can be accompanied by dances. The whole opera may

well be treated in the spirit of ballet.

Scene 2. Introduction should suggest a storm; the soft passages not gentle but with vivid sforzandos and a sense of shudder. Sorceress alone on the stage, gradually becoming visible in the darkness; stands quite still. Strict time; rather slow; words very distinct and horrible.

'Appear, appear!' Witches come gradually in, almost unseen. Bass phrase CFED D' Bo should enter at decidedly quicker tempo. All entries to be

taken up very smartly, almost before their time.

' Harm's our delight' with a sudden burst of breathless energy. (One beat

in a bar.)

The chorus are always wildly excited and undisciplined. But the Sorceress has complete control over them, and a mere look or gesture of hers reduces them to cowering terror and motionless silence. This look or gesture comes with the entry of the string chord. 'The Queen of Carthage' almost spoken more than sung, but in the strictest time. 'Deprived of life' this more sung; the Sorceress lets her emotions go and may expand on her high notes.

'Ho ho ho', pick it up at once without waiting. Pace of a Beethoven scherzo. This is very difficult; chorus had better not shift their places, but

should appear excited, waving arms, etc., some standing.

'Ruin'd ere the set'. Chord very decided; Witches very harsh and excited. 'Tell us, tell us' hurry on; 'how', hold this back. 'Shall this be done'

slower, but strict rhythm; chords on pianoforte very firm.

Sorceress brings in strings with gesture of control. Speaks softly, but very clearly, explaining the plot. 'The Queen and he . . .' she seems to see a vision—the chorus are hypnotized into seeing it too—tense stillness. Triplet chords very distinct but not hacked. Chorus absolutely tense and motionless, as if seeing vision until bass quavers D C Bz, where it ends, and the tension is relaxed—all attention on the Sorceress again. 'Charge him sail' hold back a little—very firm and decided.

'Ho ho ho' bursts wildly in as before, no waiting. Where 'Ho ho ho' is

marked p it must not relax, but be spiteful and snarling.

Duet. Change of mood. 'Now we must get to business, there's a lot to do'. The two witches should have harsh voices. During the duet sung in front, the chorus, directed by the Sorceress, bring the cauldron to the middle of the stage. Some cluster round it, others bring ingredients. The false Mercury is prepared. He may rise from the cauldron or be brought in as a dummy (real person) and dressed up as Mercury. This must be finished by the end of the duet. 'In our deep vaulted cell'. Chorus form a ring. At first they do not notice the echoes. (The echoes should be sung by a full chorus a long way behind, singing fairly loud. This wants careful rehearsal. Don't have four solo voices—they don't sound like an echo and they generally sing out of tune.) Gradually they begin to notice them and take pleasure in them, as if they were spirits answering them. At return of theme (page 44) the chorus dance slowly round 'widdershins', i.e., the wrong way to the sun, holding hands, and at the end of each phrase stop to listen to the echoes; or they may stand and sing, and move during the echoes. At end, clear off to sides leaving stage to the dancers for the Echo Dance. The Echoes are danced by shadowy forms at the back, or seen as shadows on a cloth (dancers behind cloth and light behind them—this is most effective).

It is very difficult to get all this (two orchestras) exactly together, but it is worth while taking endless trouble to secure the right balance. Don't

leave it to the last rehearsal.

Scene 3. Clearing in a forest. The fountain or spring of Diana in a conspicuous place. Chorus may enter, led by Belinda, or be discovered grouped, resting after hunting. Dido with Aeneas. Dido silent and troubled.

Song, 'Oft she visits' preferably sung by a woman, not Dido. During the song everybody in turn goes to the spring and drinks ceremonially as an act of thanksgiving to Diana. A point must be made when Dido and Aeneas drink and look at each other. During the Symphony after the song there may be a dance of women, or it is easier to arrange a procession of men bearing trophies of the chase, ending with the boar's head to which the next recitative alludes. Aeneas draws Dido's attention to it. She ignores it, noticing only the approaching storm. She rises in great perturbation as the storm breaks. Lightning on the repeated chord of D—storm increasing. The chords not tremolo, but separated and very harsh.

'Haste, haste'. Belinda must start off at once in a great hurry, no waiting. She is here chorus leader; chorus hastily putting on cloaks, etc. The impression of a sudden downpour must be given. It may be convenient to repeat the movement by orchestra alone, going back to chorus entry (p. 58) to third beat of last bar page 60. This gives the chorus time to get off the

stage, Dido last with Aeneas.

Just as Aeneas is leaving the stage the Spirit suddenly appears (on the cadenza page 61) and stands still; Aeneas leaves Dido (who goes out) and faces the Spirit. All very firm and decided (strict rhythm) until the Spirit vanishes.

Pause on E major chord can be held as long as required for Aeneas to take a step or two towards the front so as to show change of mood and style. 'Yours be the blame' great crescendo, change from 'despair' to 'blasphemy'; then gradual slowing down to end; this requires careful study to get requisite dignity and sense of ending to the act.

Scene 4. The Harbour. Night. Ships in background; a tavern and lights. Curtain can rise at beginning of music or later; sailors and crowd of population dancing, drinking, embracing, etc. Complete contrast to all previous scenes; a picture of rough popular English life.

Sailor's Song. Mind the B2 on first beat of bar 8, page 65. There may be a temptation to sing C. B2 is right in spite of the harmony. Chorus: note

that tenors start the tune which sopranos imitate.

Sailors' Dance. Men only—show dance to amuse the crowd on the stage. Chorus should applaud and cheer during the two bars after the last repeat.

(This will probably be encored.)

Sorceress and Witches emerge from the crowd and come right forward. There must be no attempt to keep them half visible or at the back, or the effect will be lost. Very biting in style and sharply accentuated. 'Our plot has took' second time (middle of page 70), they may turn towards chorus who gradually crowd round listening.

'Our next motion', care must be taken not to let the action down here. Sorceress in middle gleefully explaining to the crowd that they have still more devilries ahead. Crowd more and more excited until they burst wildly (at once, no waiting between movements in all this episode) into the

'revolutionary chorus' 'Destruction's our Delight'.

Chorus clear off. Dance of Witches and Sailors. Allegro 4/4. The Sorceress makes great gestures as if summoning someone and giving orders. Violins very hard and energetic as if saying: 'You little devil, come along, come along!' A ragged child appears and is given a lantern like a slum will-o-the-wisp. Vivace 3/4. Two girls appear, led by the child, and dance invitingly. Two sailors appear, seize the girls and dance violently; two more sailors try to take the girls; the others are jealous, draw knives and fight.

Allegro con spirito 2/2. The girls run off screaming and fetch the chorus

—general tumult, all clearing off at the end.

The three movements can be repeated or not, as desired; the last one

must make as much noise as possible.

Dido and Belinda approach, perhaps heavily cloaked and rather timidly, as if it took great courage to come to such a neighbourhood. The stage is now empty. The first bass G (p. 76) can be held alone if more time is required, and the semiquavers taken quite slowly and freely; if necessary Dido can start singing after the chord of the second line, instead of before, but once started, she must go on in strict rhythm.

Aeneas comes from the ships in time to be ready and visible when Belinda points him out; he must be level with Dido when he starts to sing. Slight pause, if necessary, for a step forward between 'Aeneas do?' and

'How?' From here very strict rhythm.

This recitative must not be hustled, but if rigidly strict rhythm is kept up without break, it can be taken slow enough to give dignity, and the actual

pace varied according to the expression.

'Away, away!' can be sung freely but very passionately. Exit Aeneas to the ships. Chords of G minor must be prolonged to give Dido time to change mood and position. Start fresh on chord of D minor (più lento).

Here the stage situation is difficult to manage and depends on resources. If there is scenery, it is advisable to drop a curtain to shut off the ships and taverns, etc., at end of page 80, providing a neutral dark background. The important thing is to secure a complete change of mood in the stage.

Chorus may enter during recitative, dressed in cloaks which will make them all look more or less alike as mourning figures. Contrast of groups I and II here ceases.

If chorus enter they should come to the front and conceal Dido and Belinda behind; this allows for a couch or bier to be arranged behind; chorus then divide to sides discovering Dido on bier preparing to die, assisted by Belinda.

If preferred, full chorus may sing 'Great Minds' unaccompanied off stage, invisible; but this can only be done when there is a complete chorus

with men's voices too, and a full body of sound.

Dido had better stab herself at end of song where strings reach G, forte,

and die slowly during following bars.

Final chorus sounds well unaccompanied, but only when the chorus is safe not to lose pitch. Singers may form processions round stage, but best keep very restrained movements; dancers may bring in roses, etc., and form groups, with or without Cupids.

End either with full stage, all forming a picturesque group, or let chorus retire during last bars and leave body of Dido alone on bier, watched by

Cupids.

NOTE

Dido and Aeneas is also published in the following editions: Choruses only: Staff 3/6 each. Solfa on hire only Female Choir Edition (choruses arranged in three parts) 2/3 School Edition (choruses arranged in two parts) 2.

Score and Parts for Strings and Cembalo are available on hire

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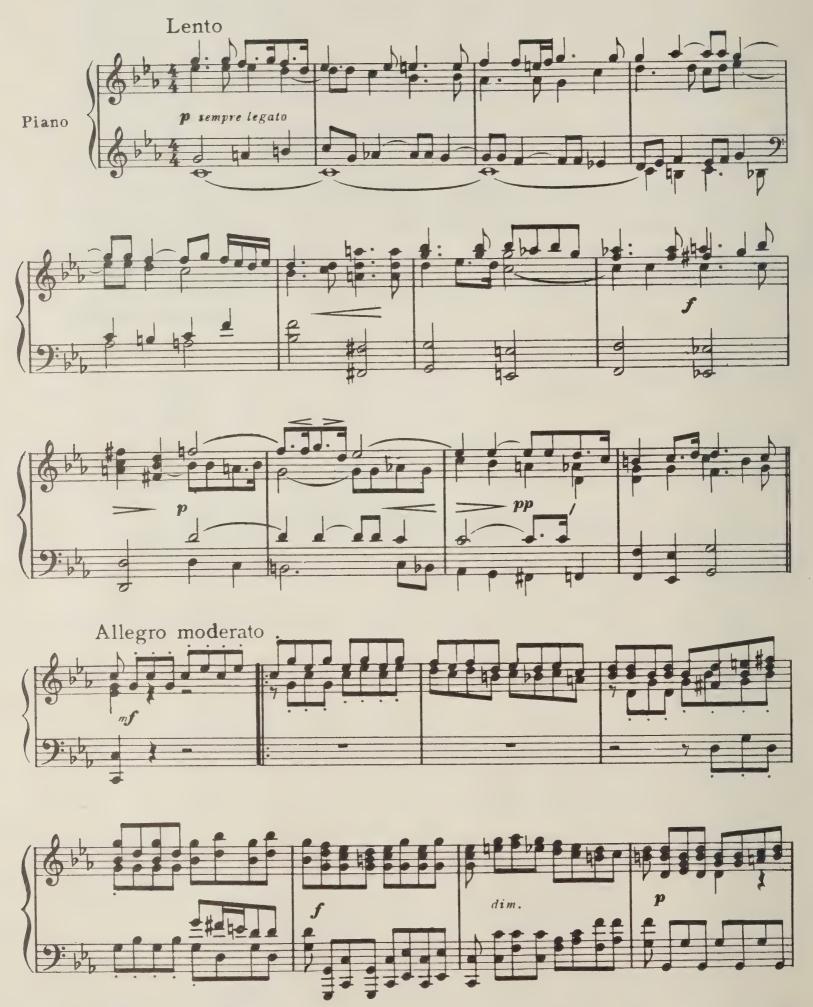
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Dido, or Elissa,	Qu	JEEN OF	CA	RTHAGE	- `	•	2	Soprano
Belinda, a Lady	IN	WAITIN	G ,	-	-		5	Soprano
FIRST WOMAN	-	-	40	-	-	-	6	Soprano
SECOND WOMAN	-	-	-		**	Mea	220-	Soprano
Sorceress -	400	-	-	ent	-	Mez	20-	Soprano
FIRST WITCH		est	•	40	-	••	5	Soprano
SECOND WITCH	-	-	~	-	**	-		Soprano
Spirit	-	-	-	-	-	400	,	Soprano
Aeneas, a Troja	n P	RINCE	400	- T	enor	or Hi	gh I	Baritone
A SAILOR -	-	-	-	***	ura.	-	-	Tenor

Chorus of Courtiers and People, Witches, and Sailors

DIDO AND AENEAS

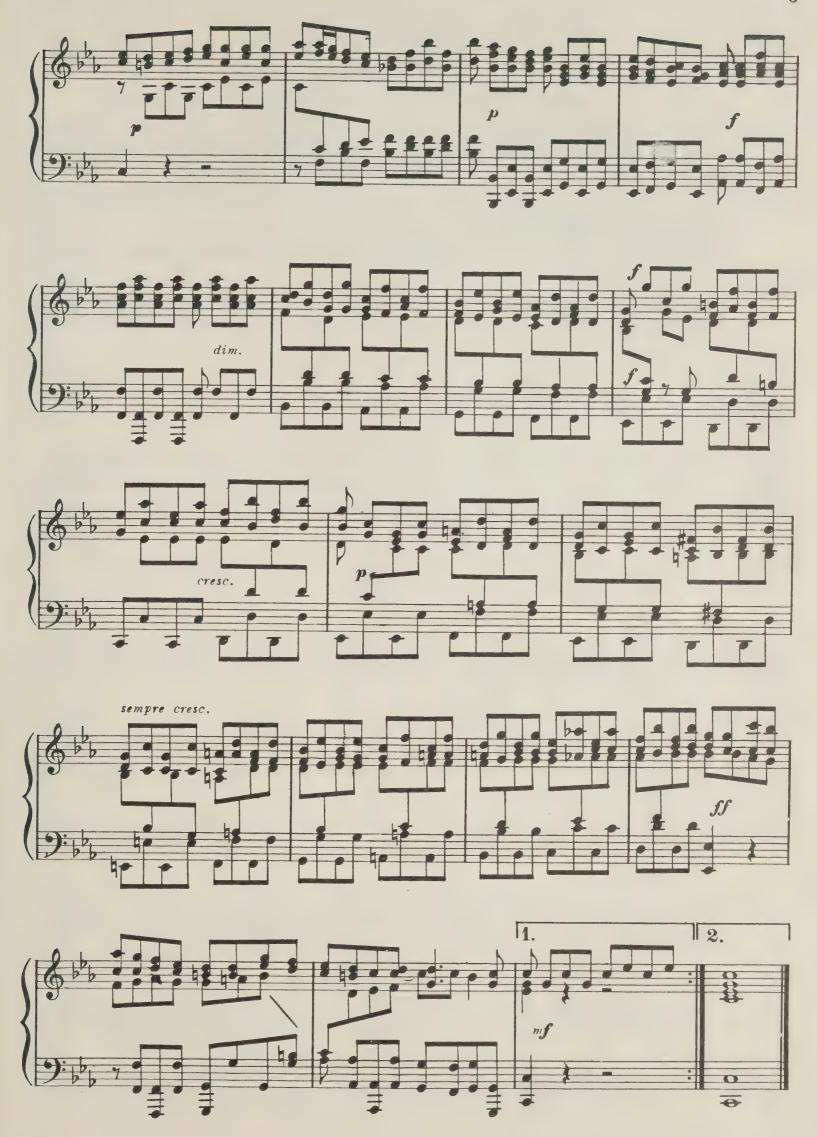
Overture

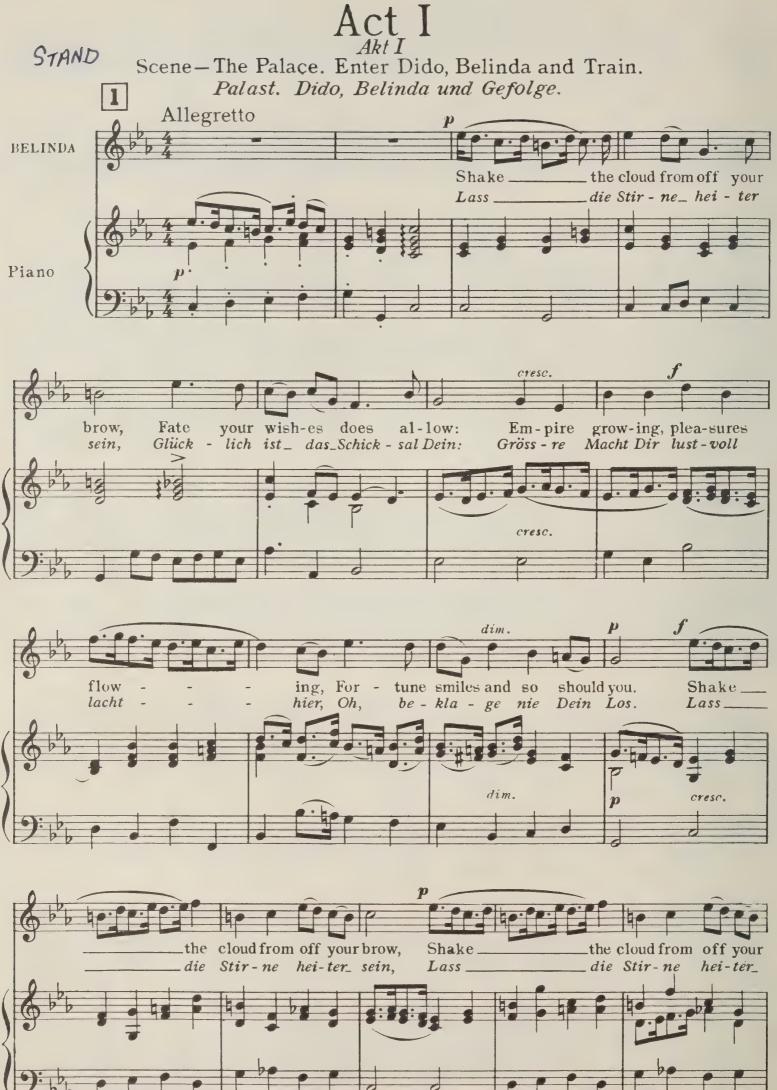


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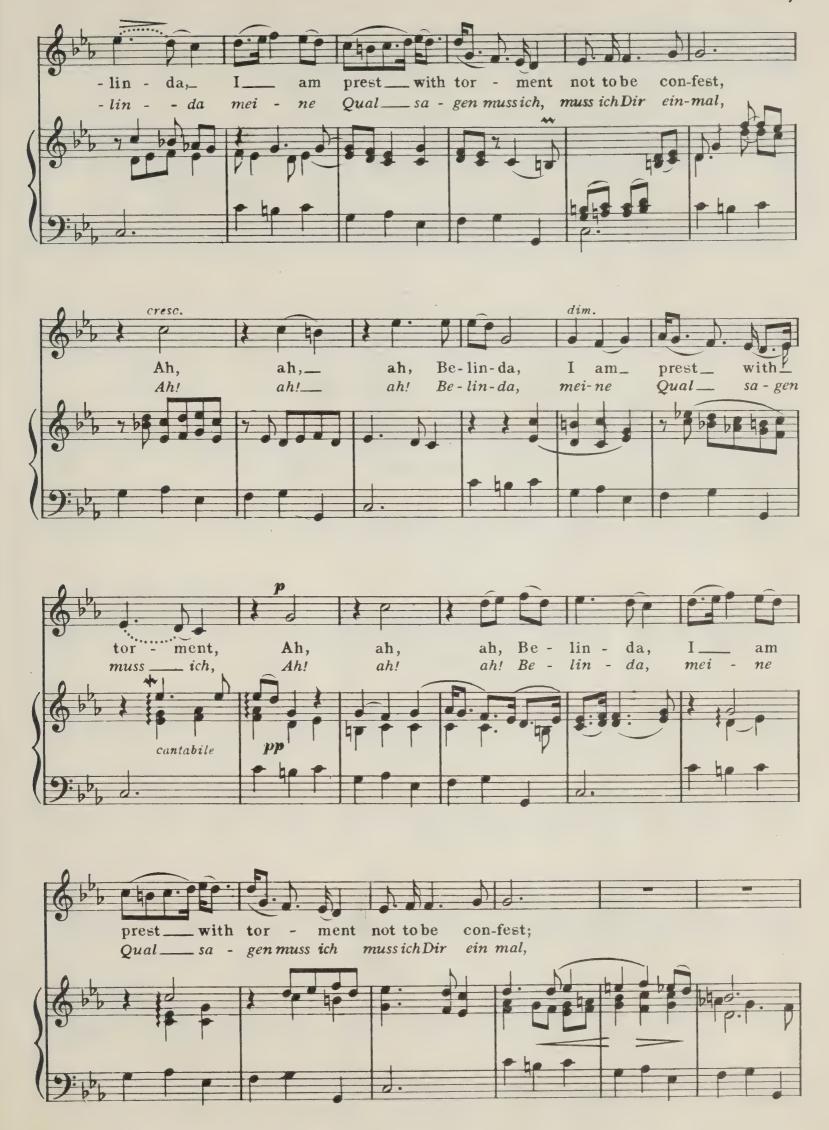








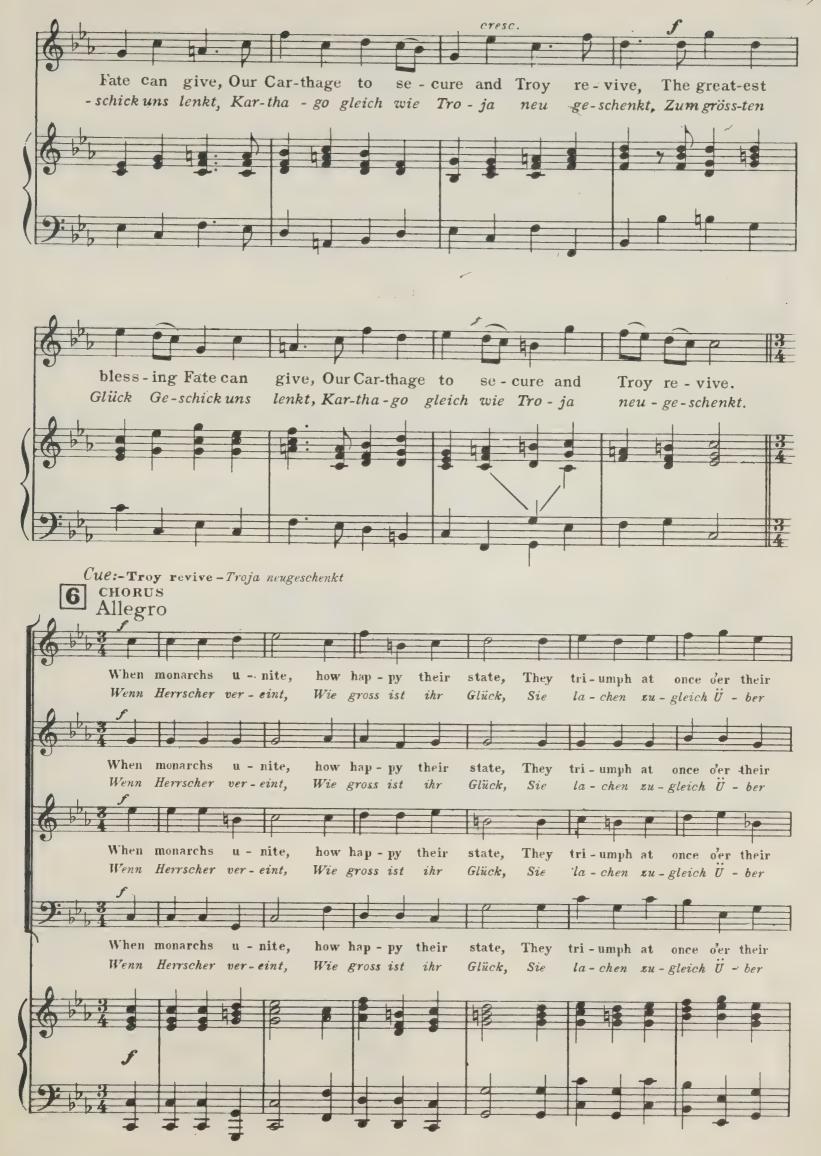


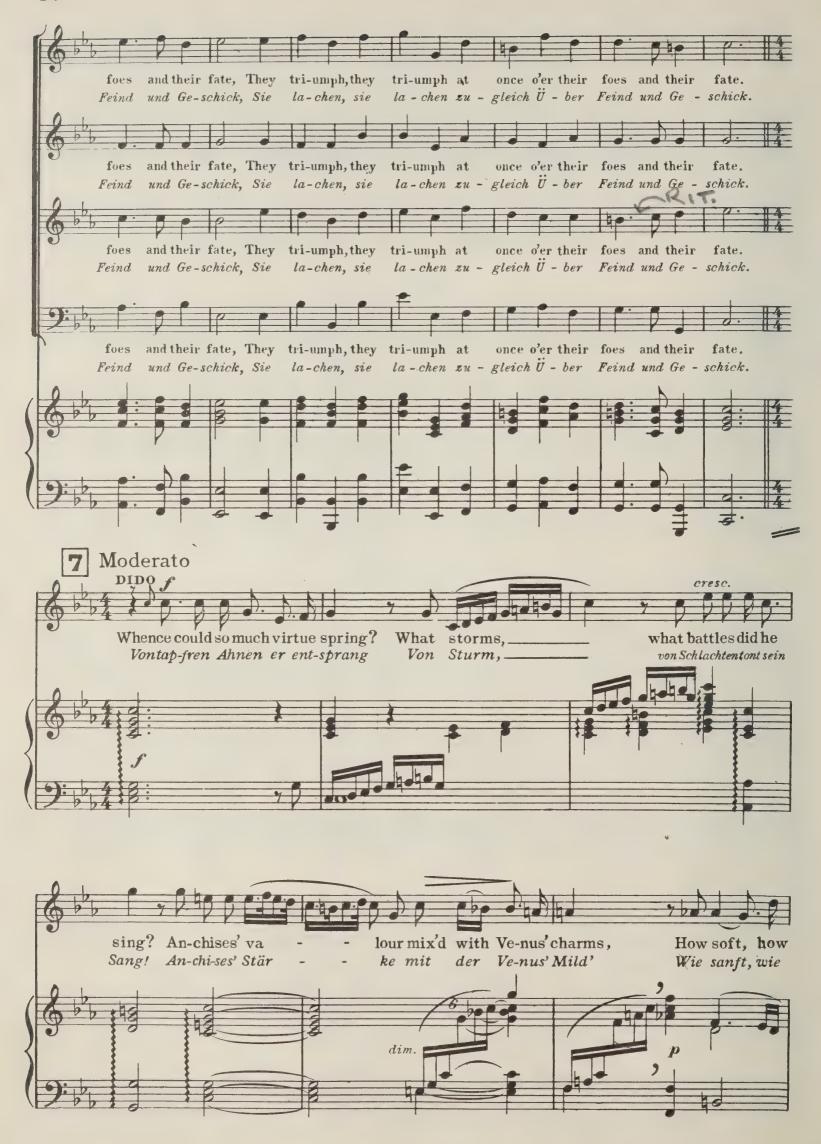




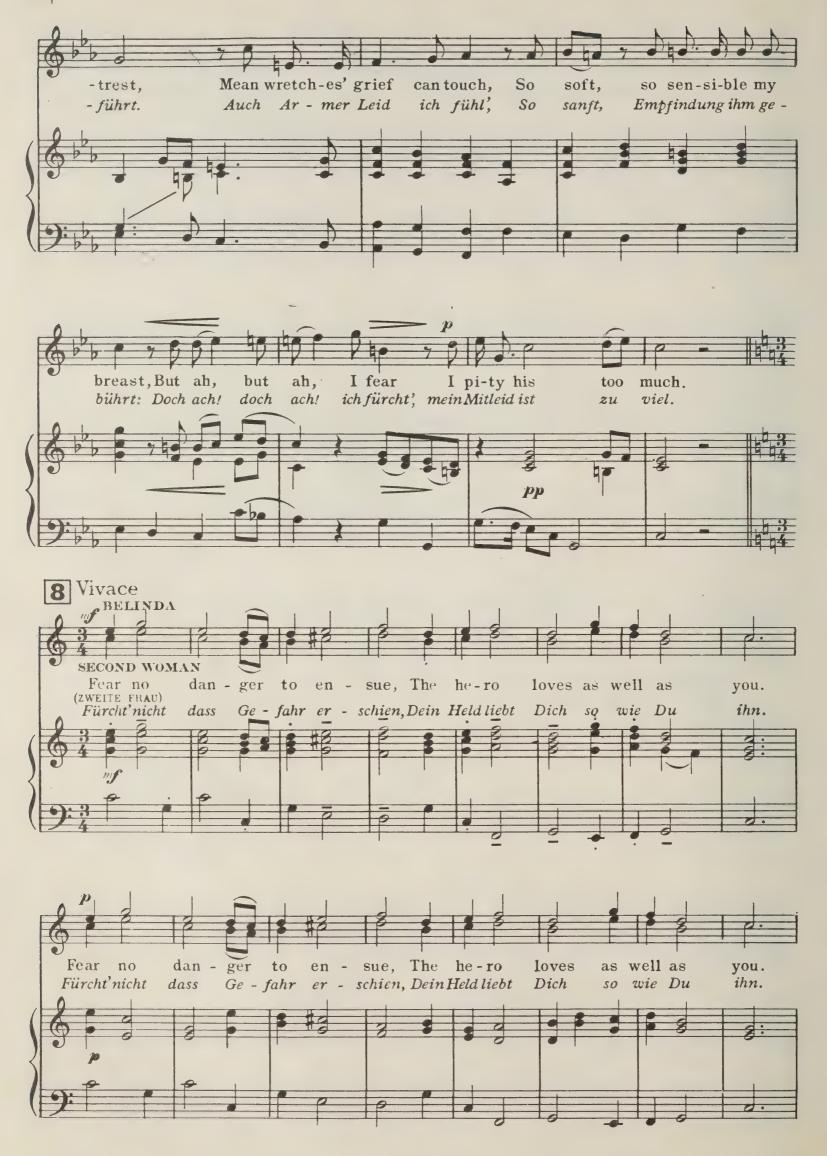


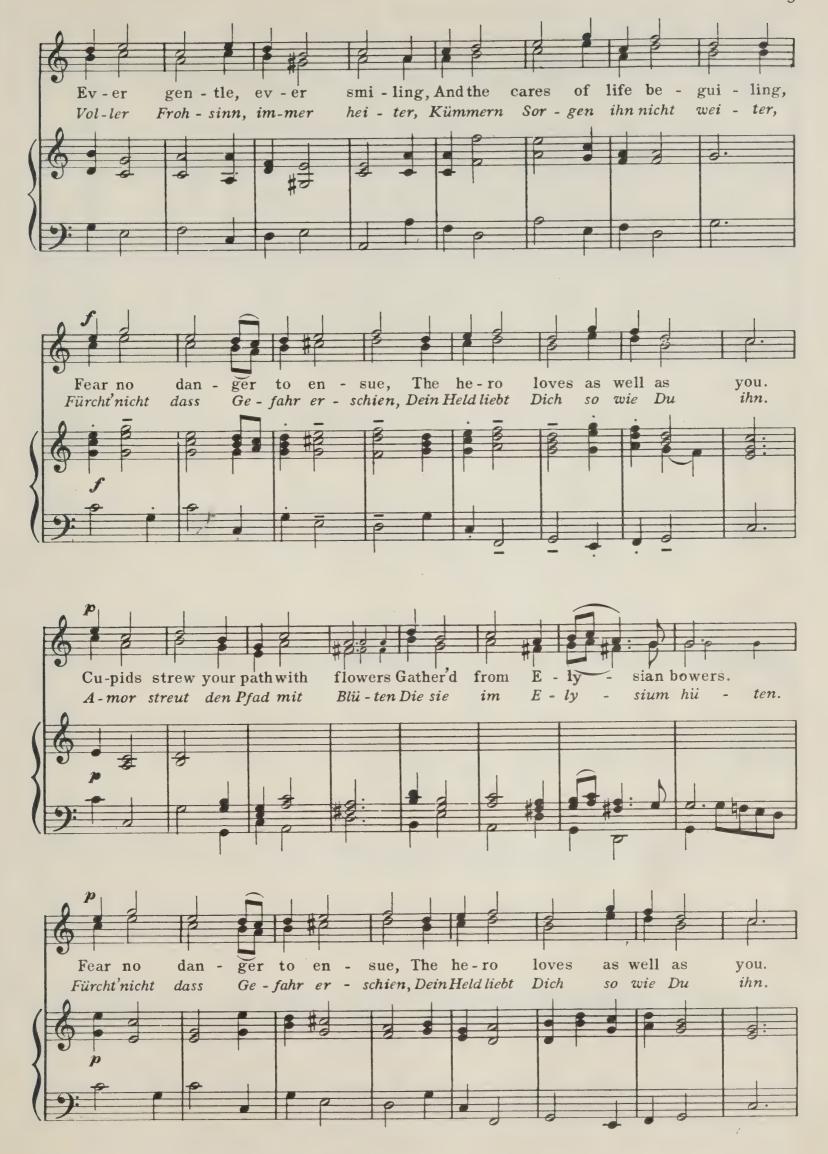


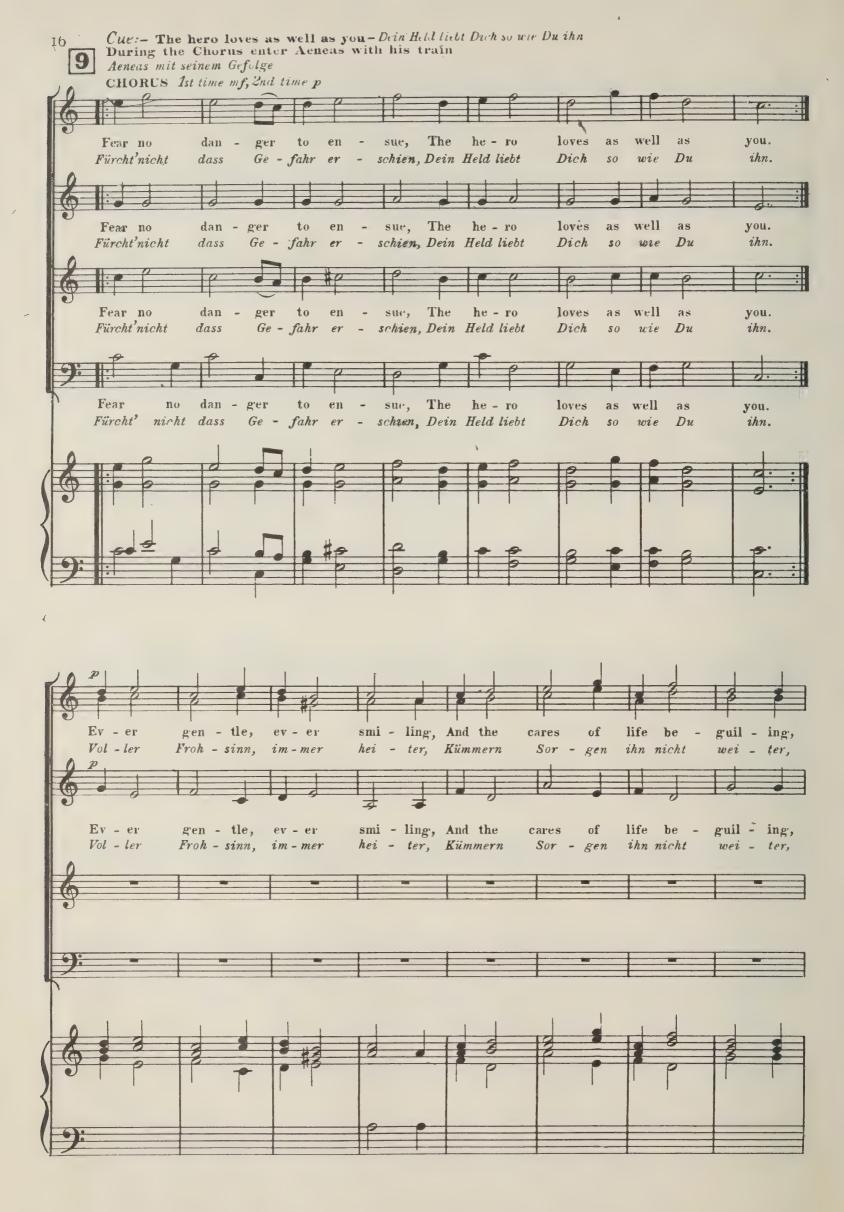


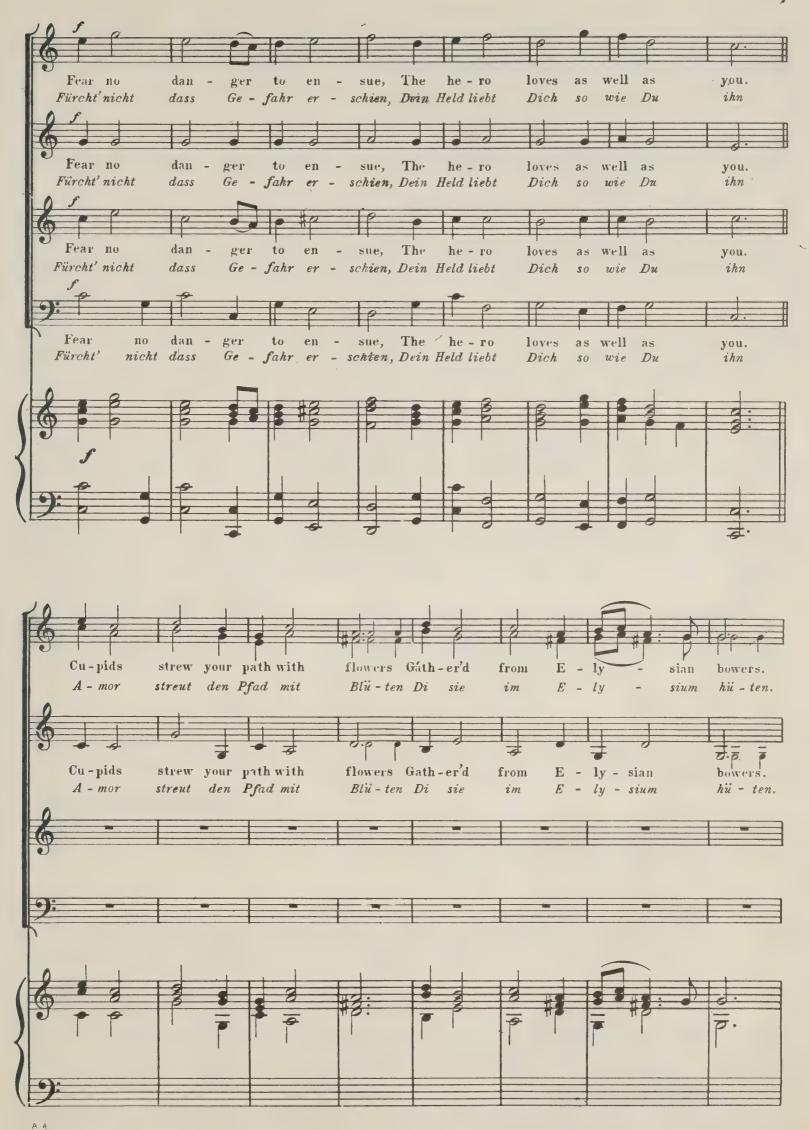


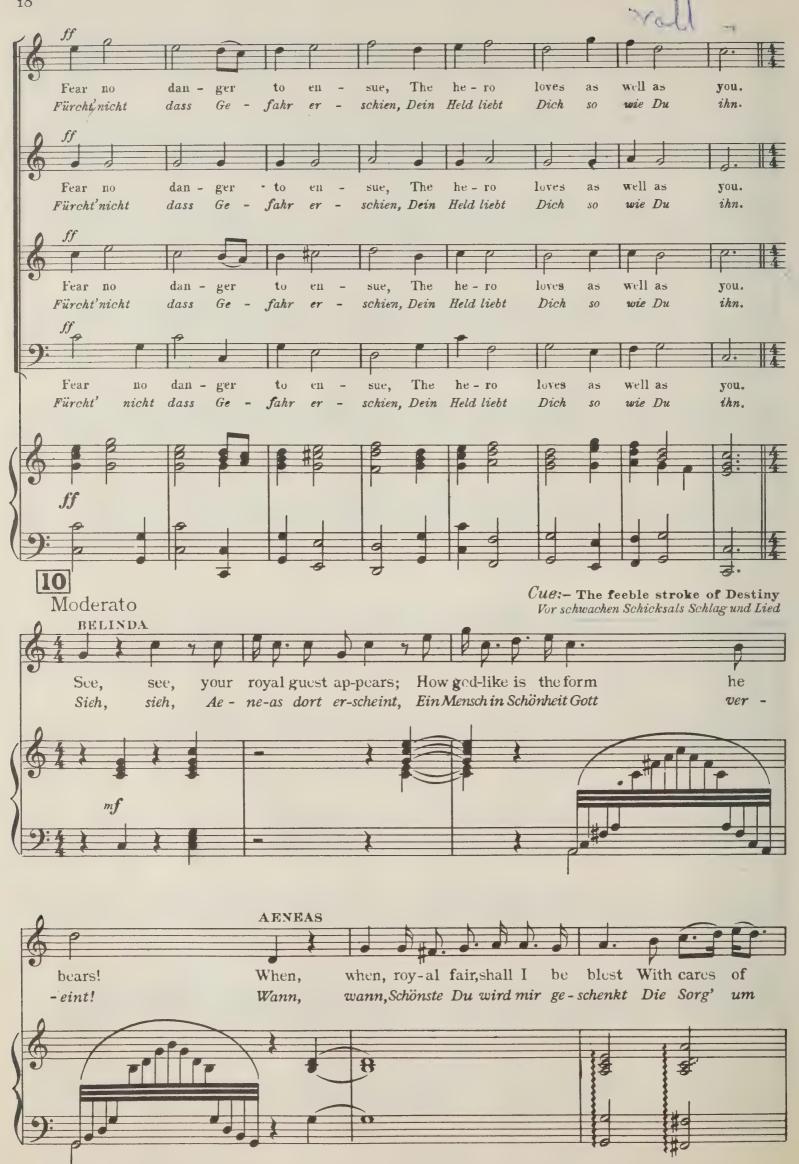




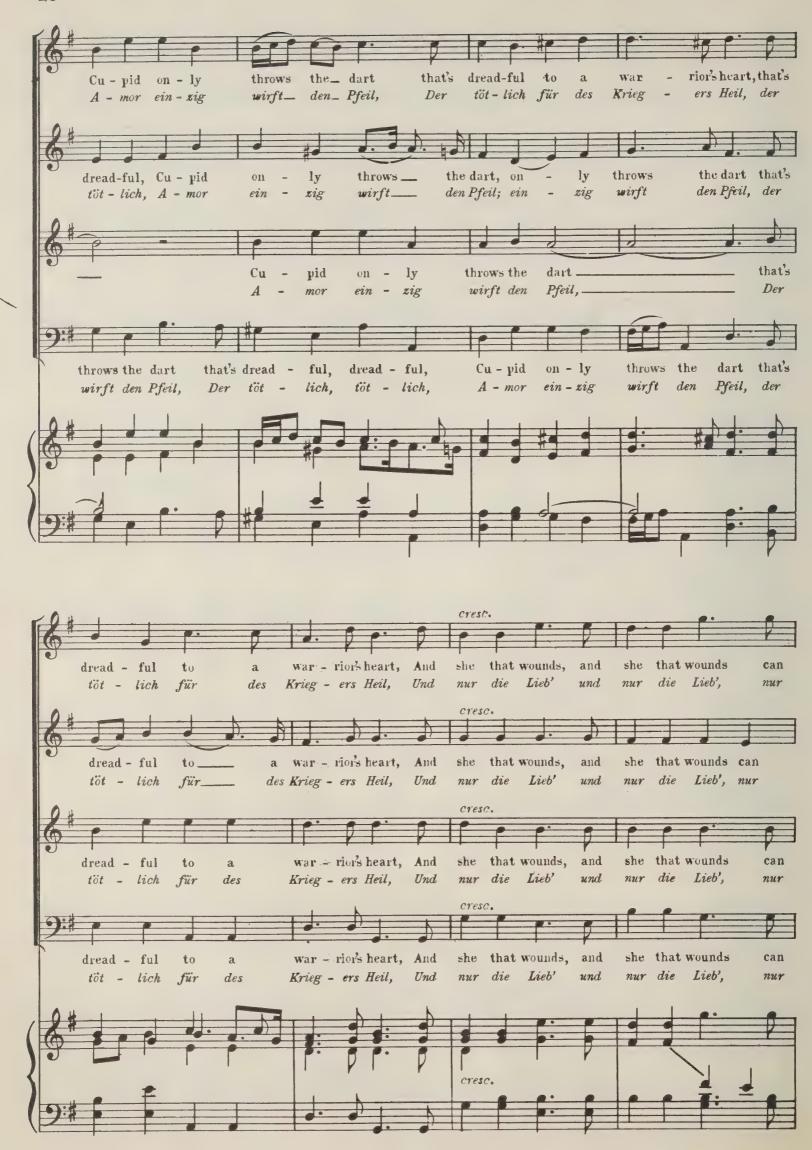


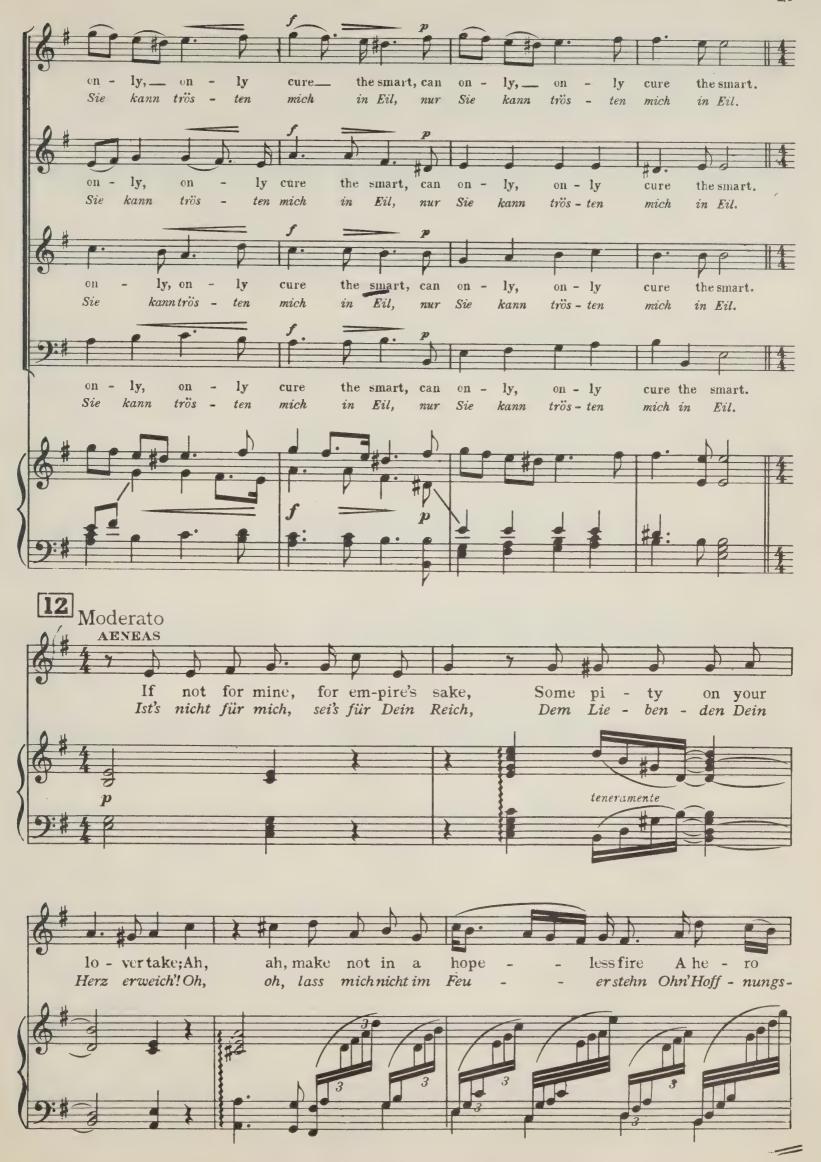


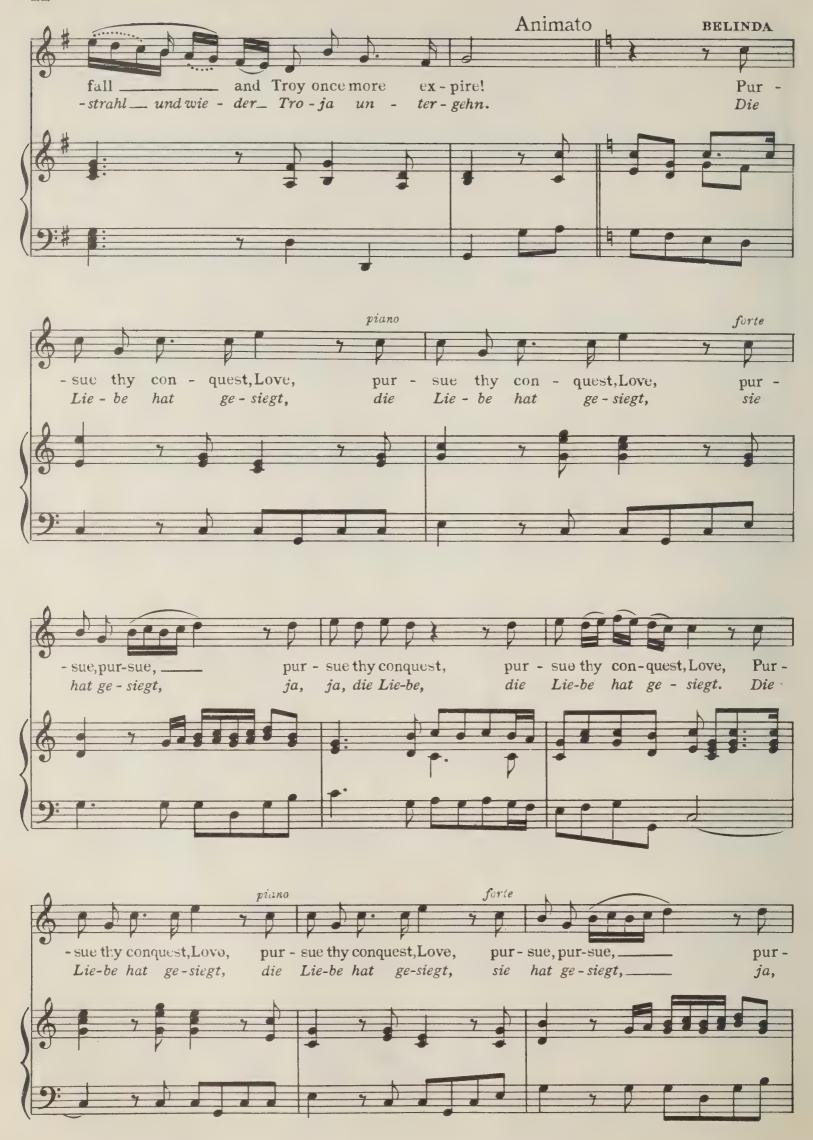


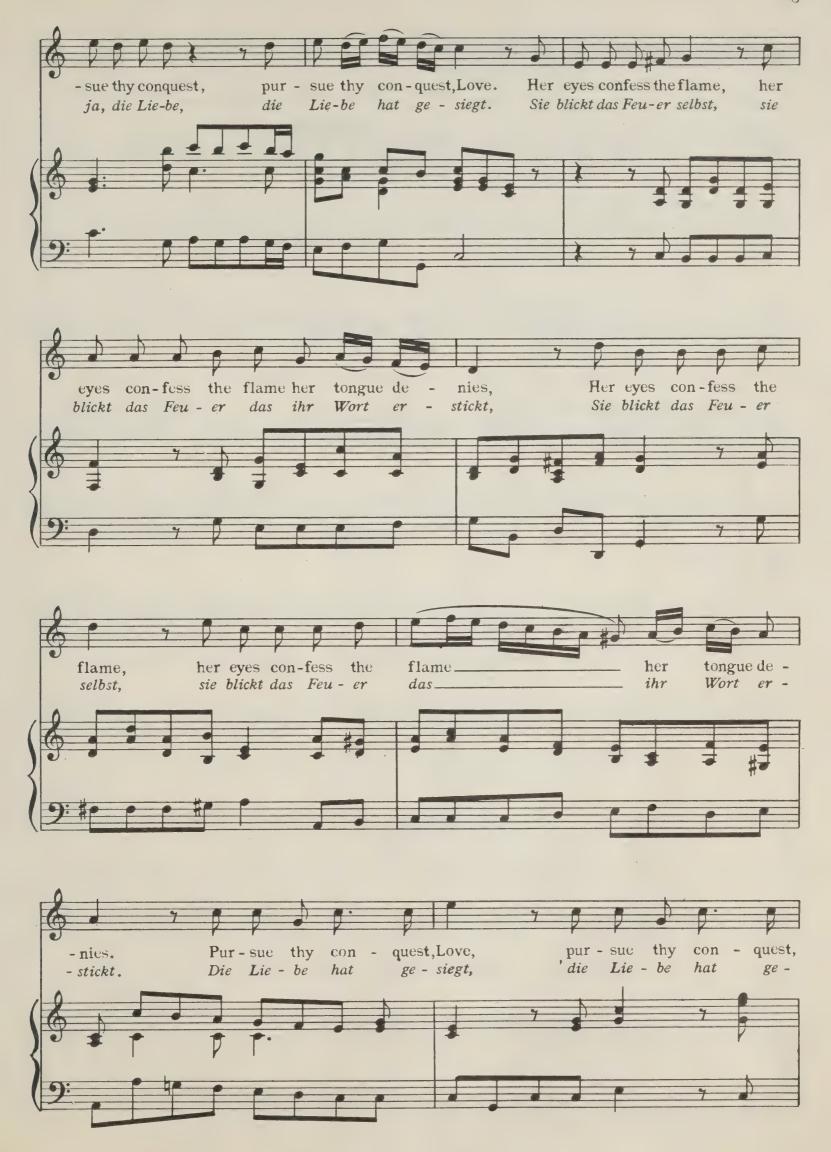


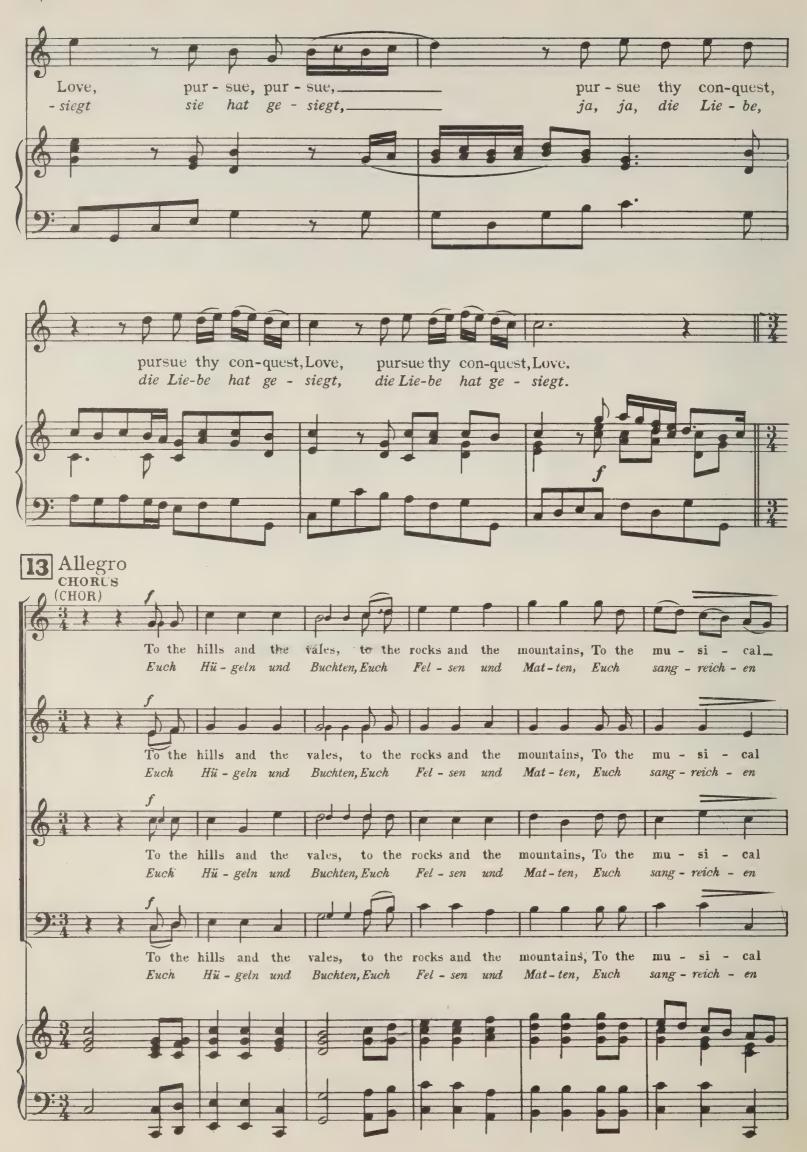


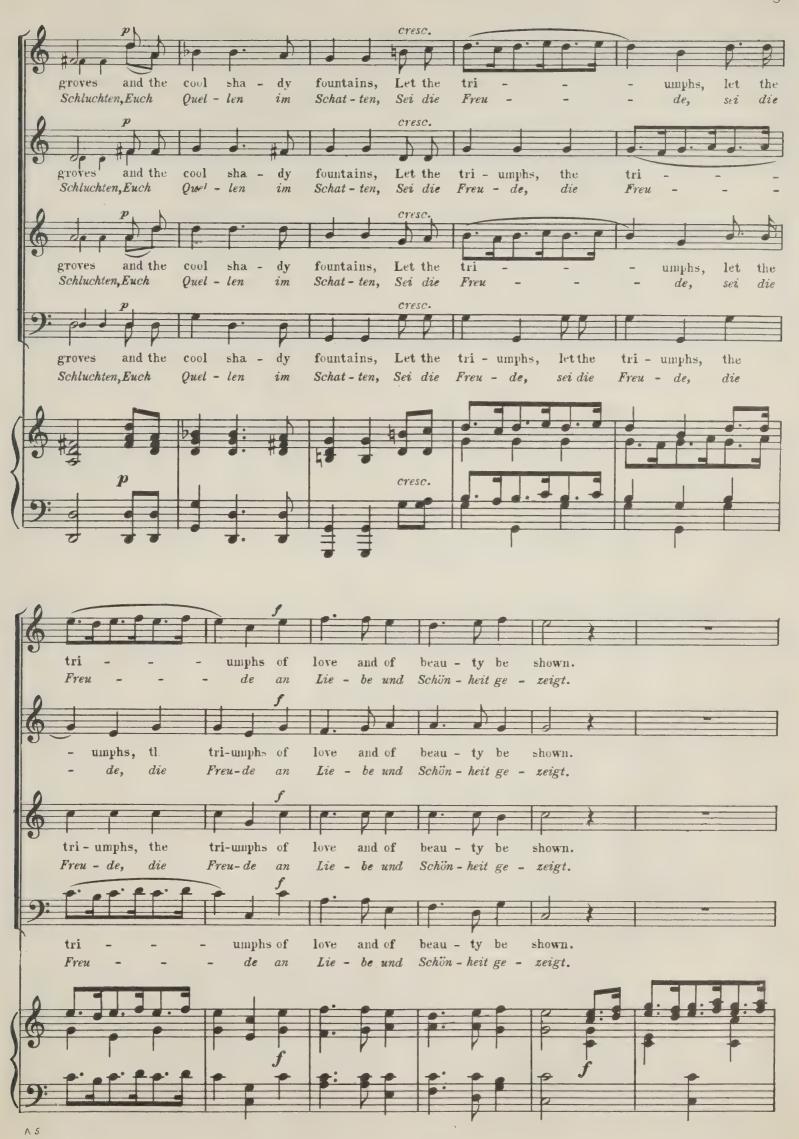


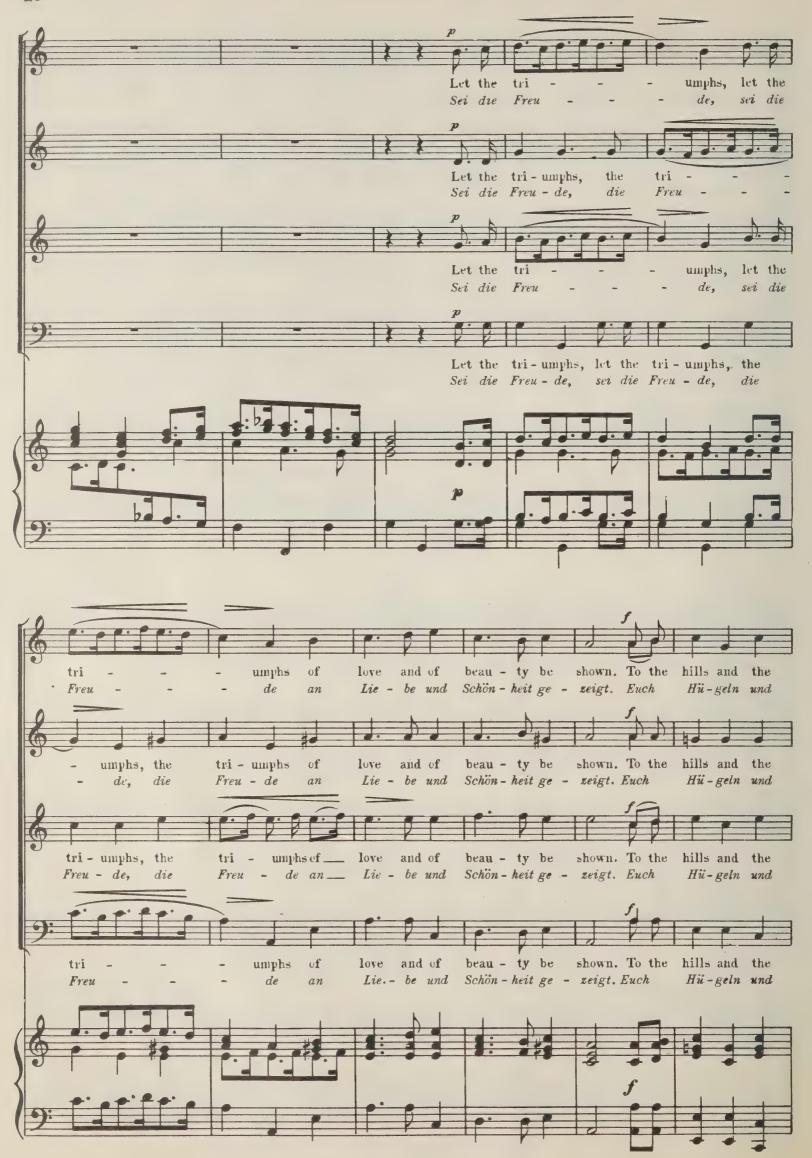




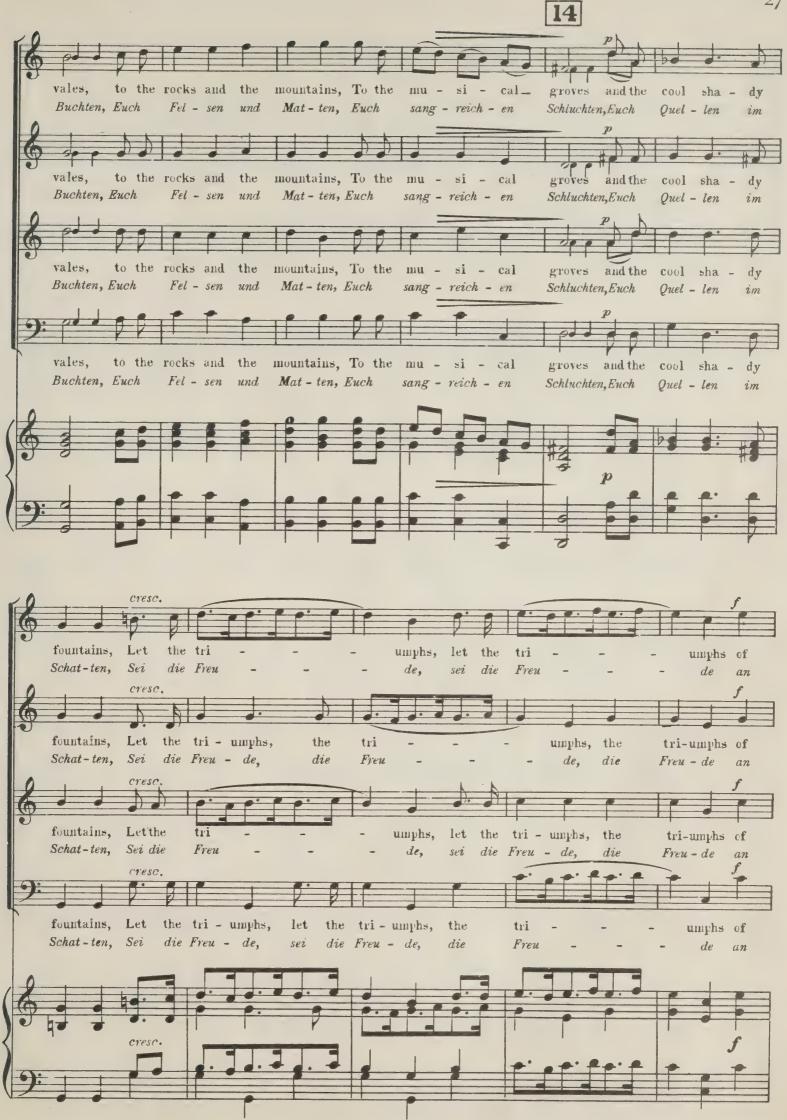


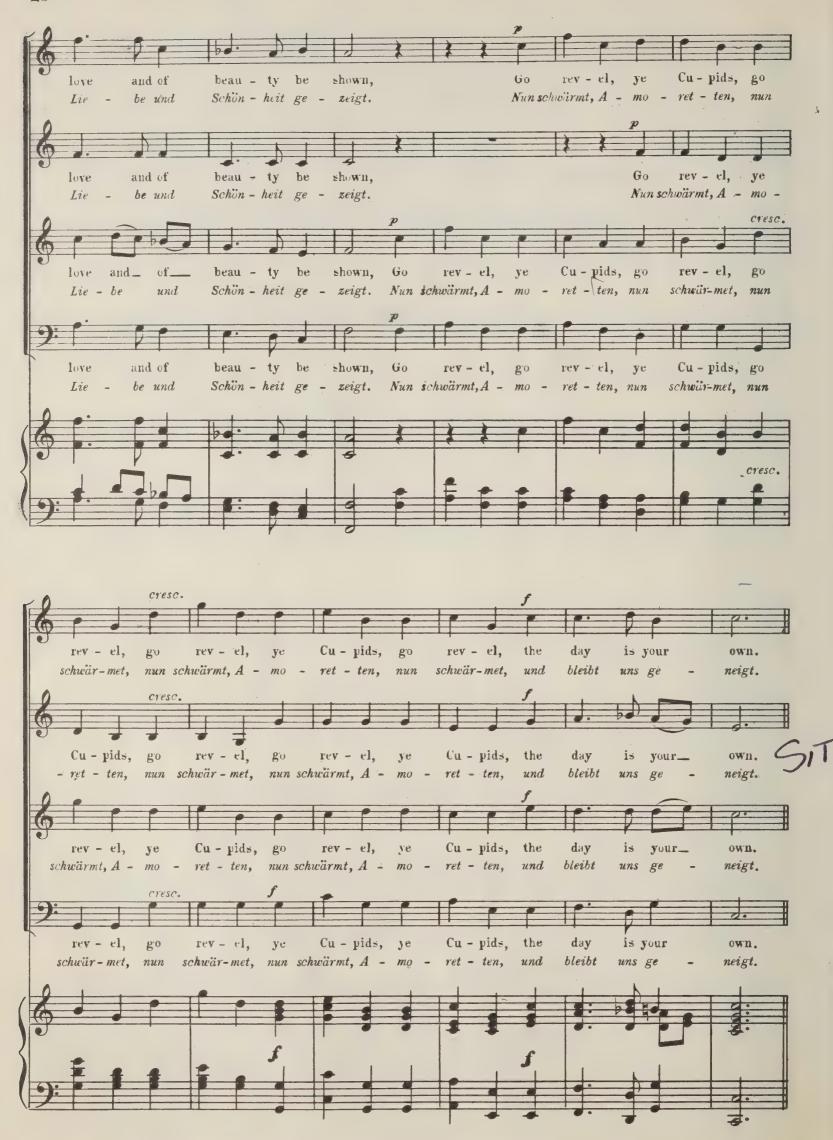


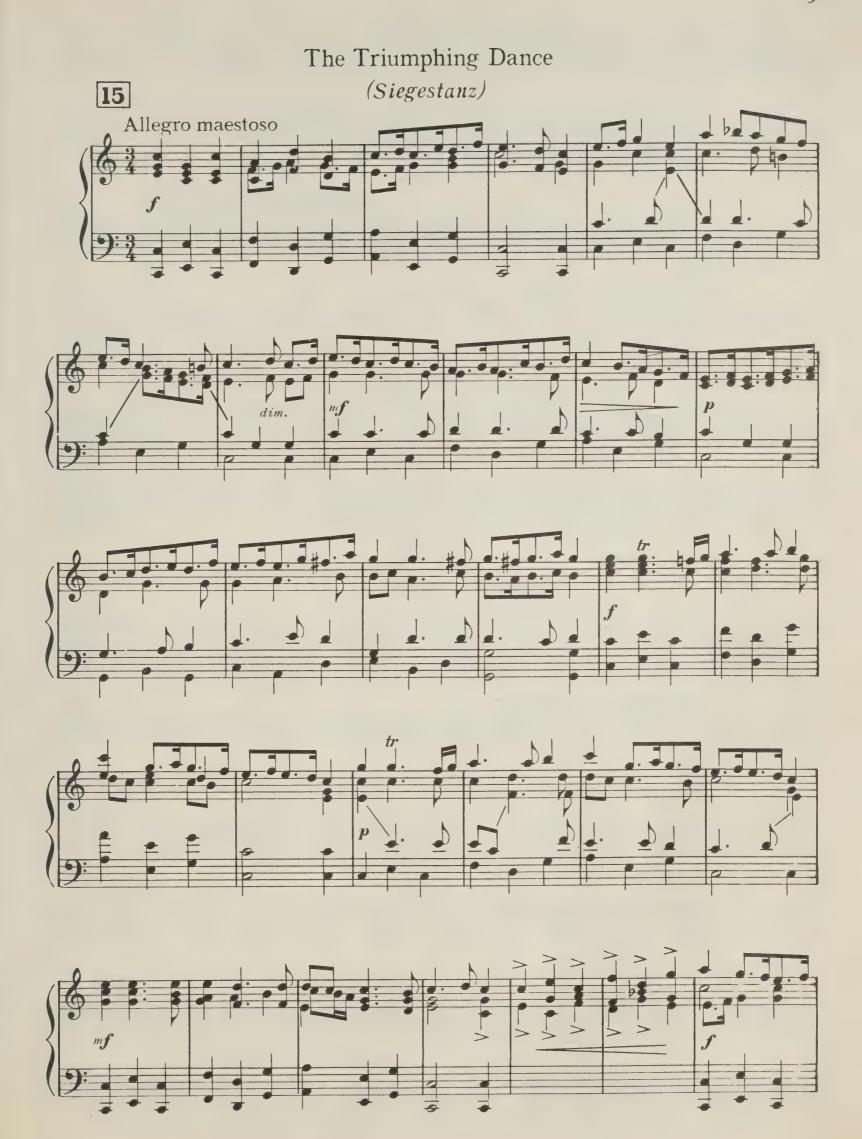




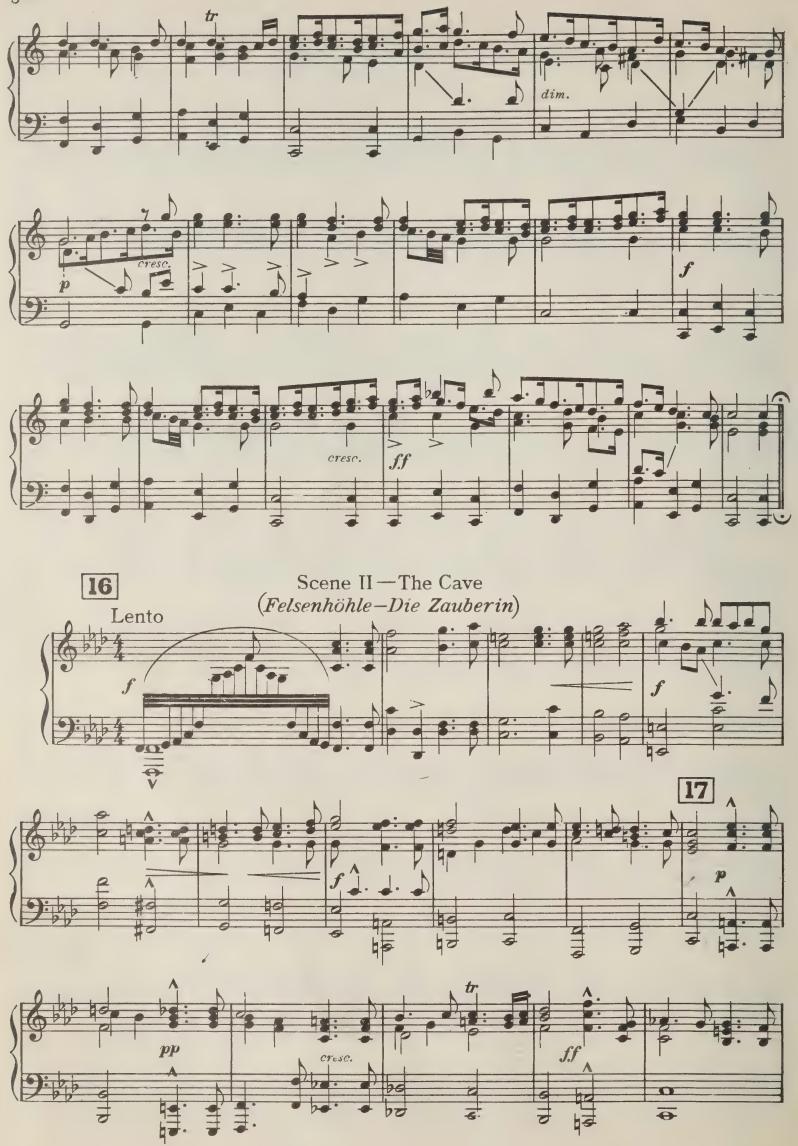






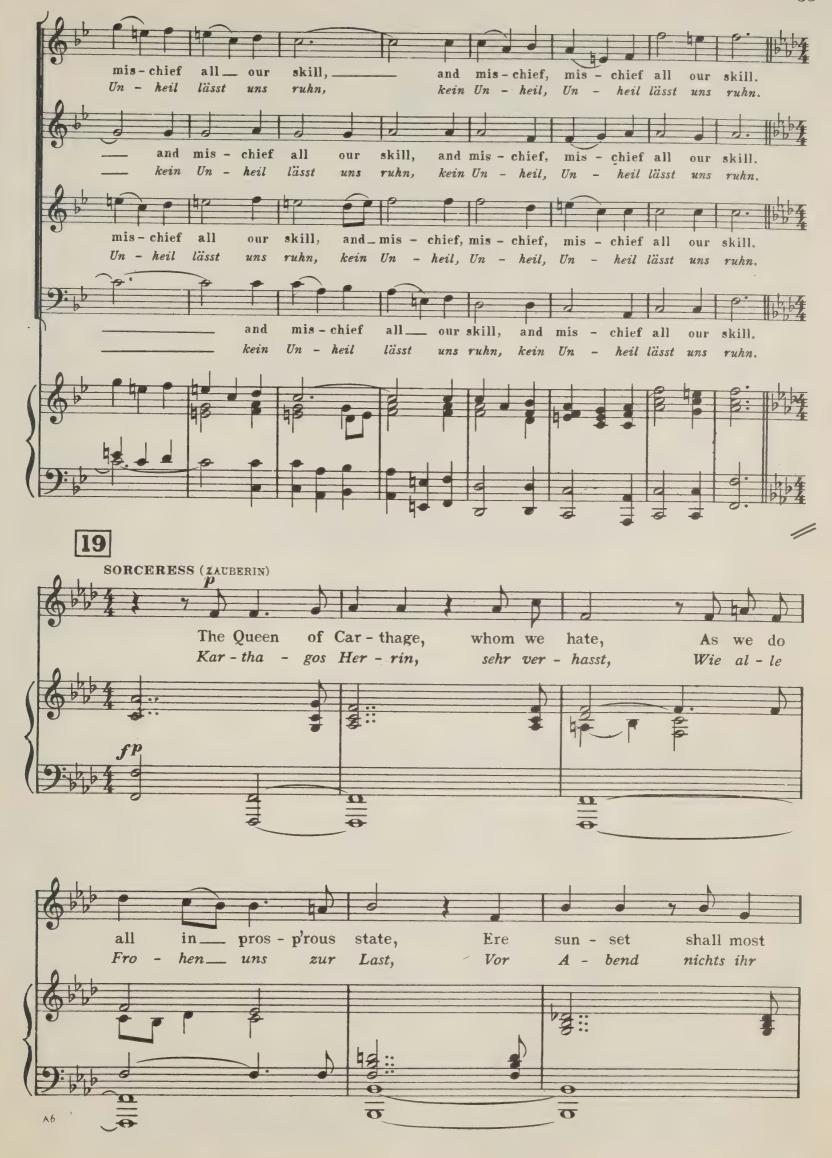








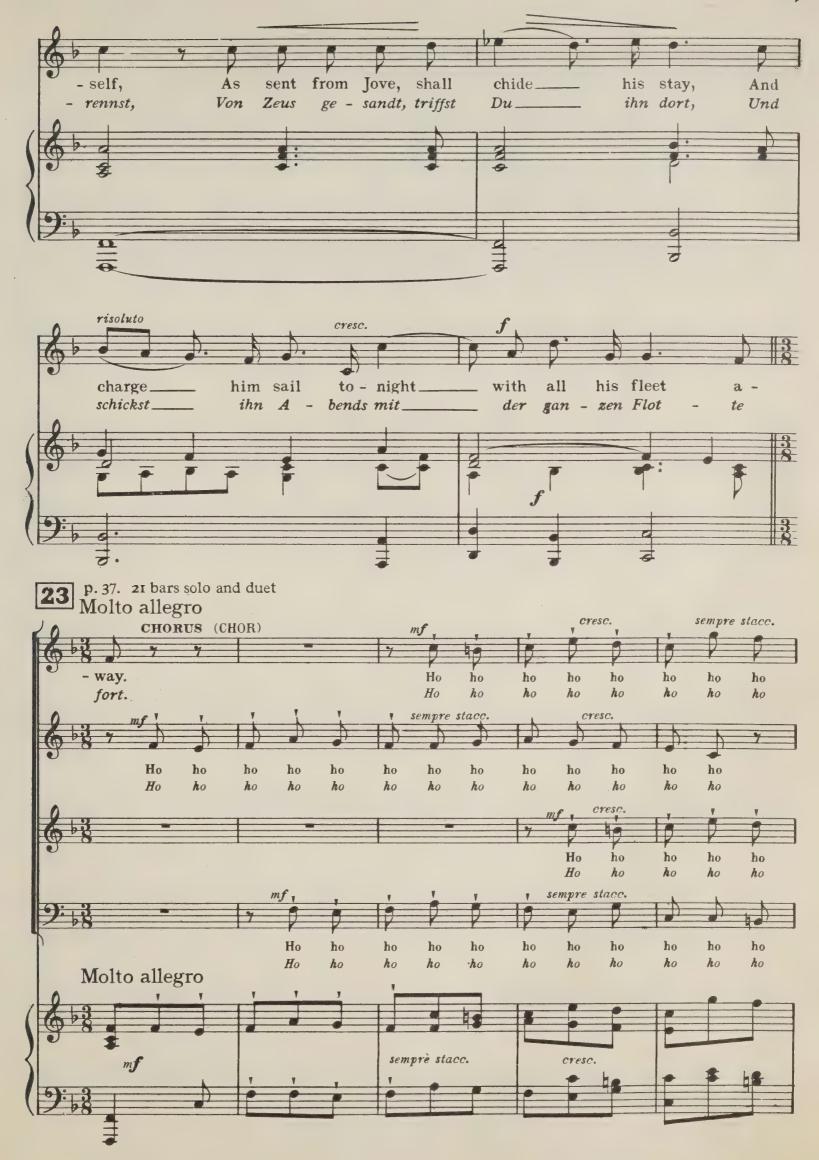


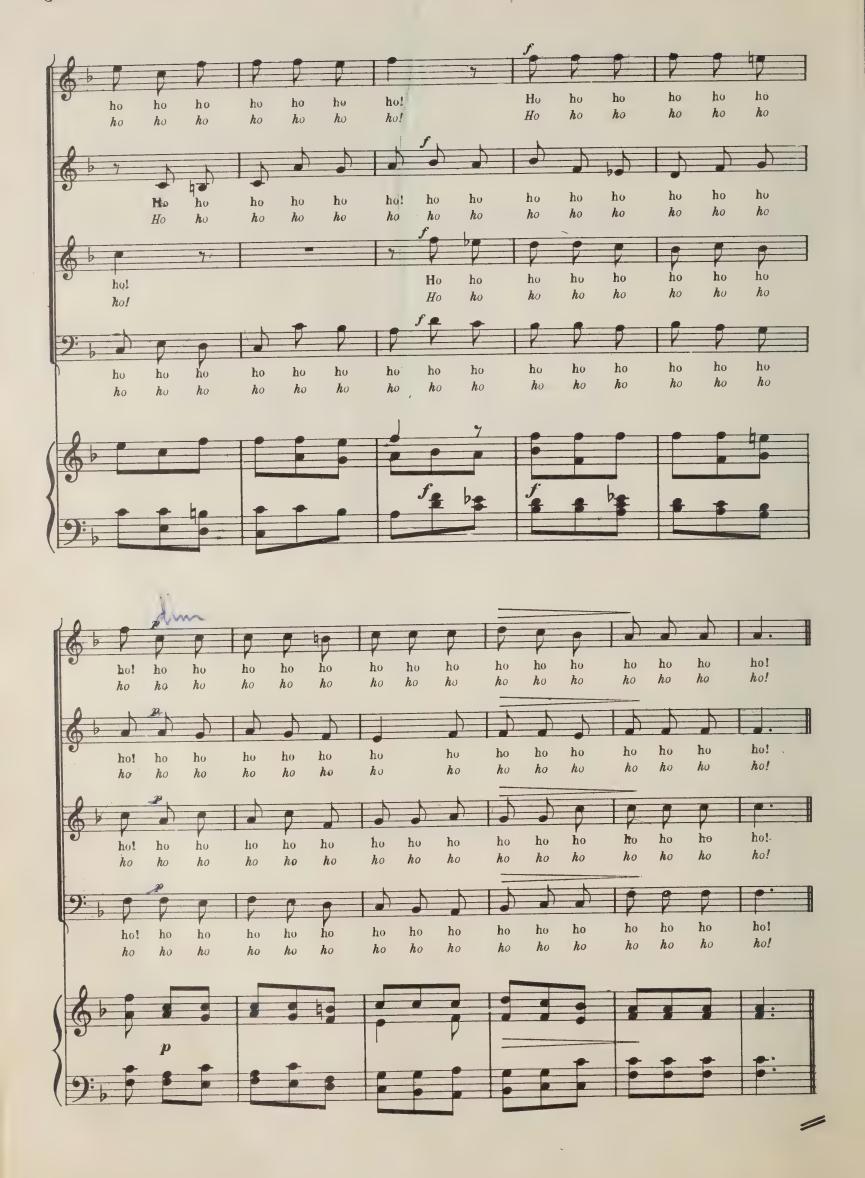






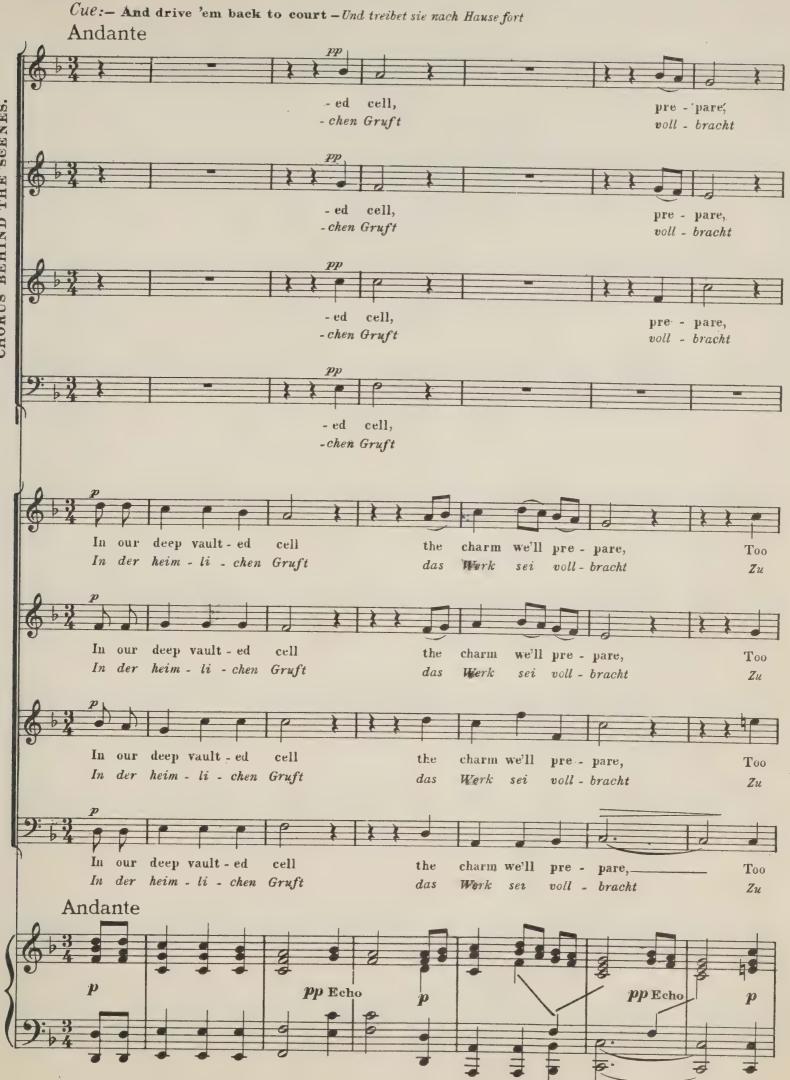


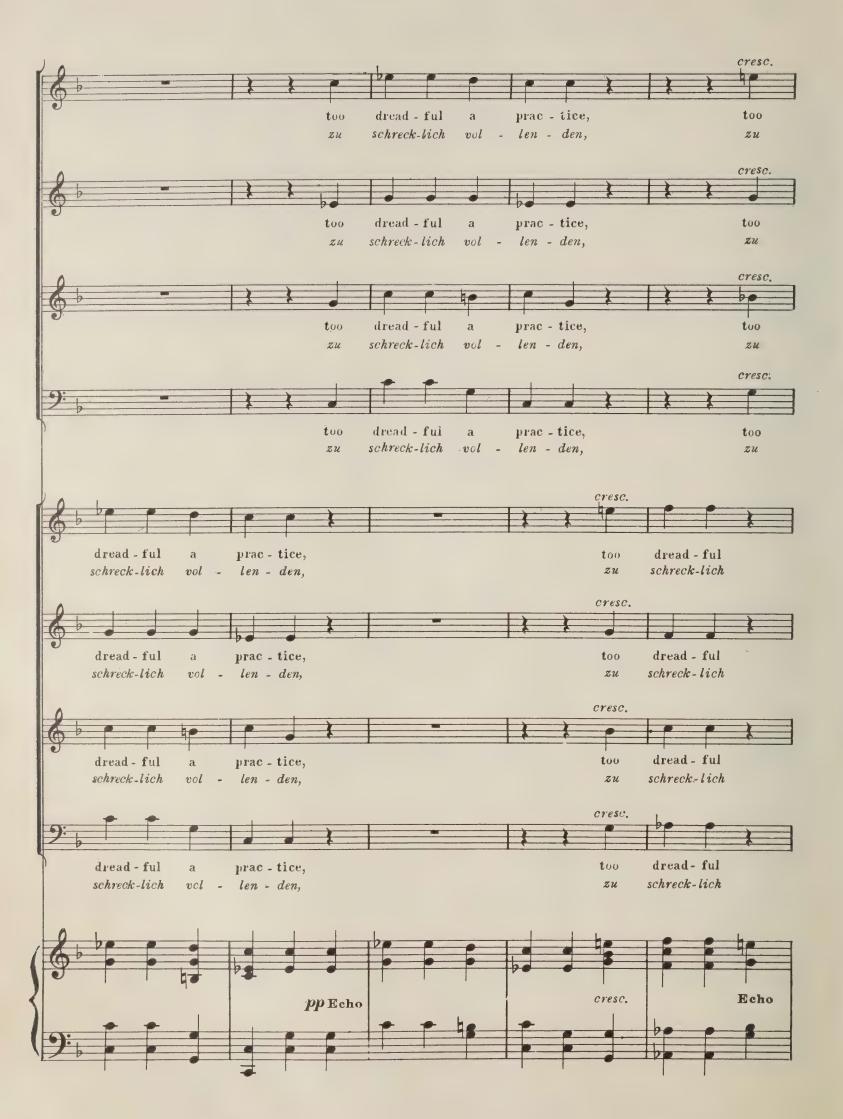


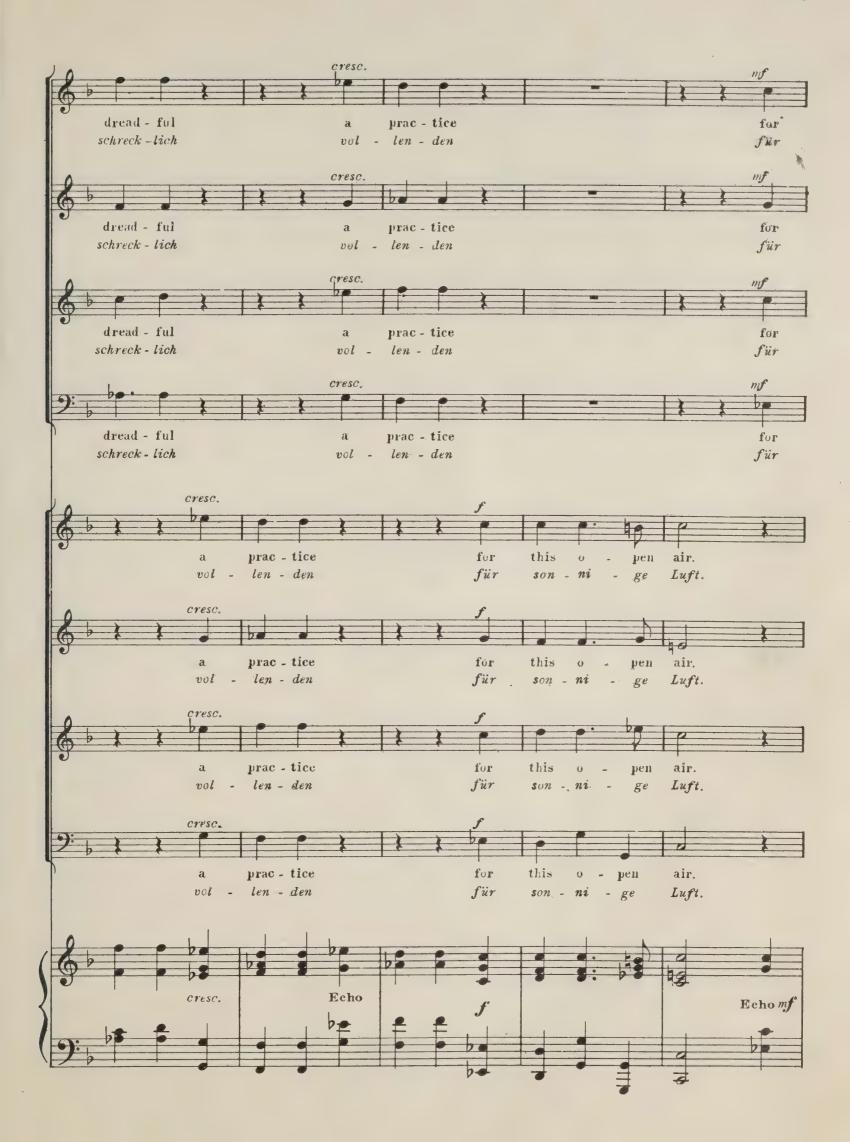


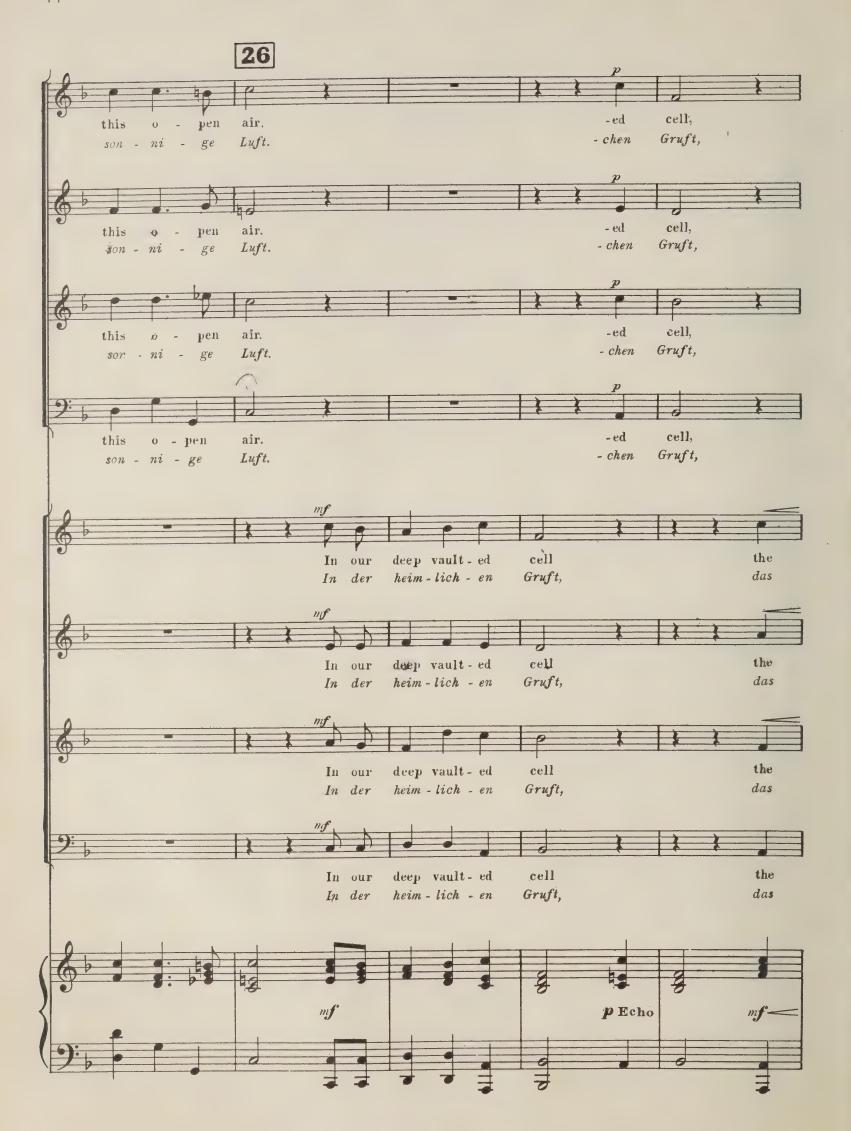


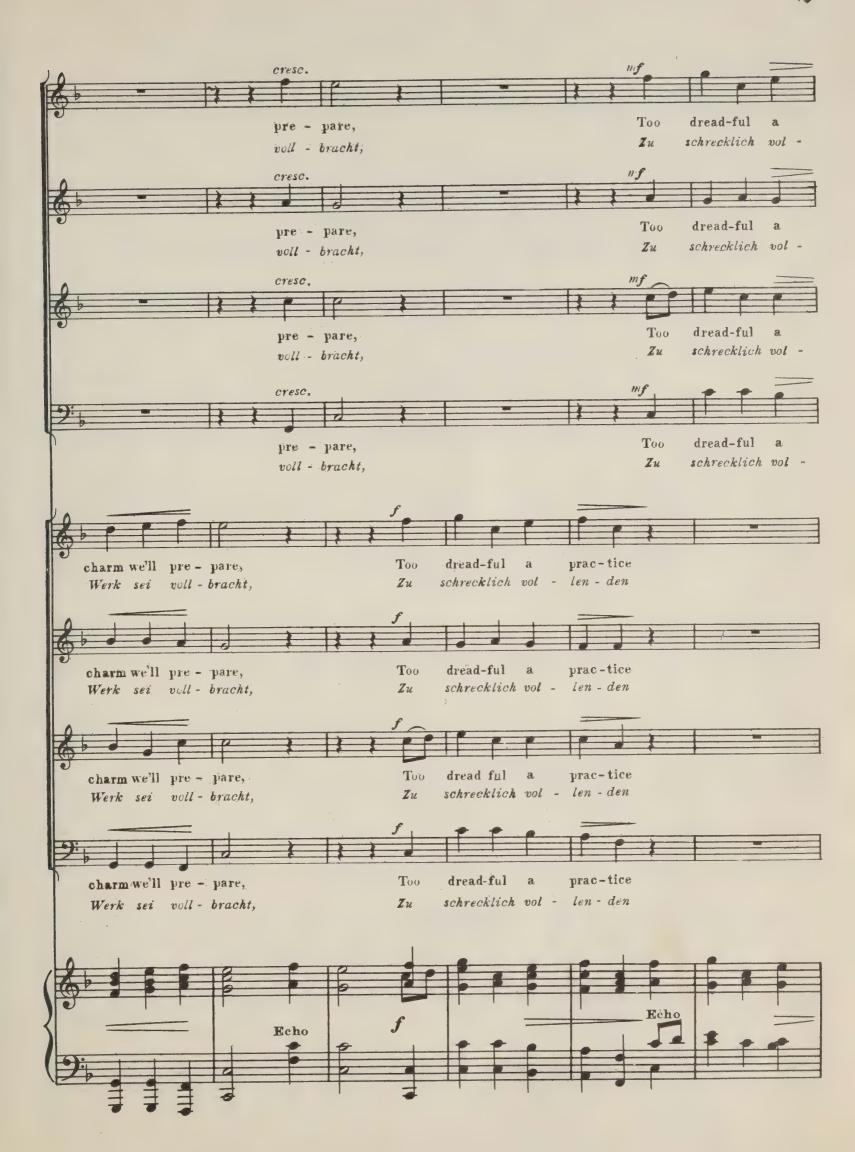
CHORUS BEHIND THE SCENES.

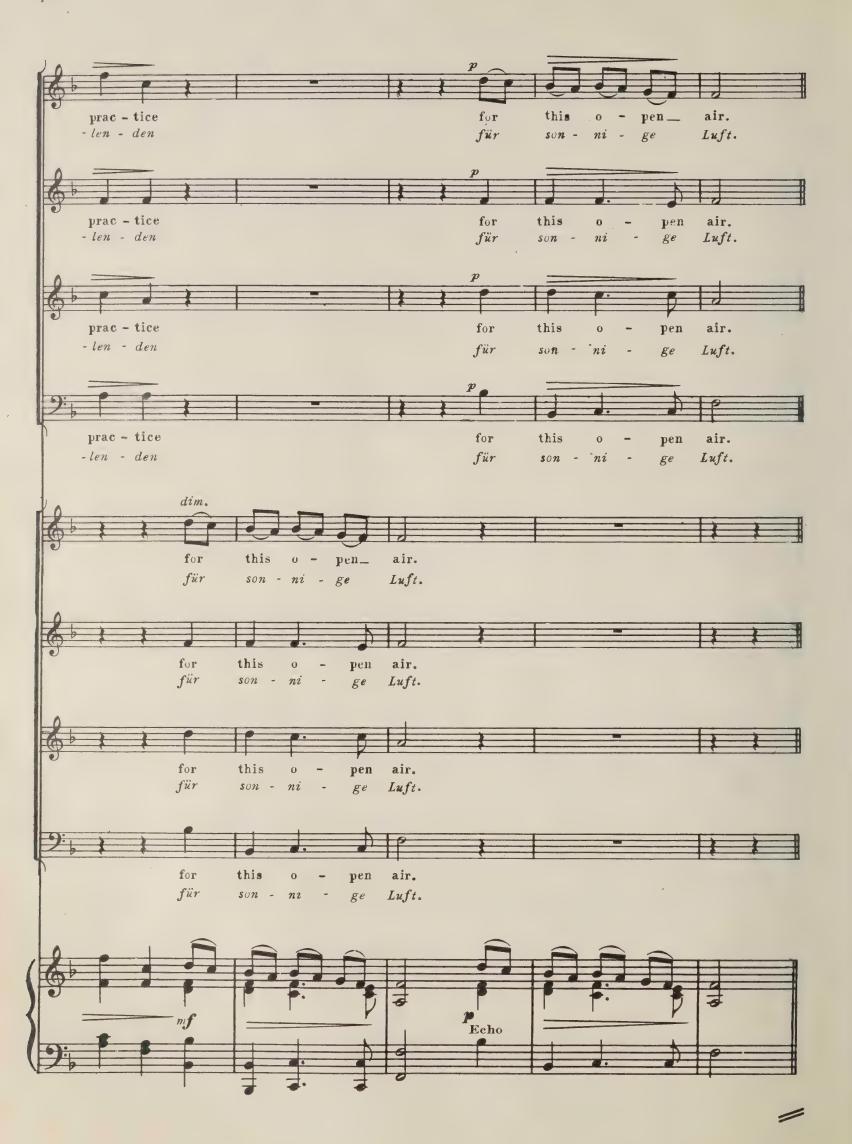






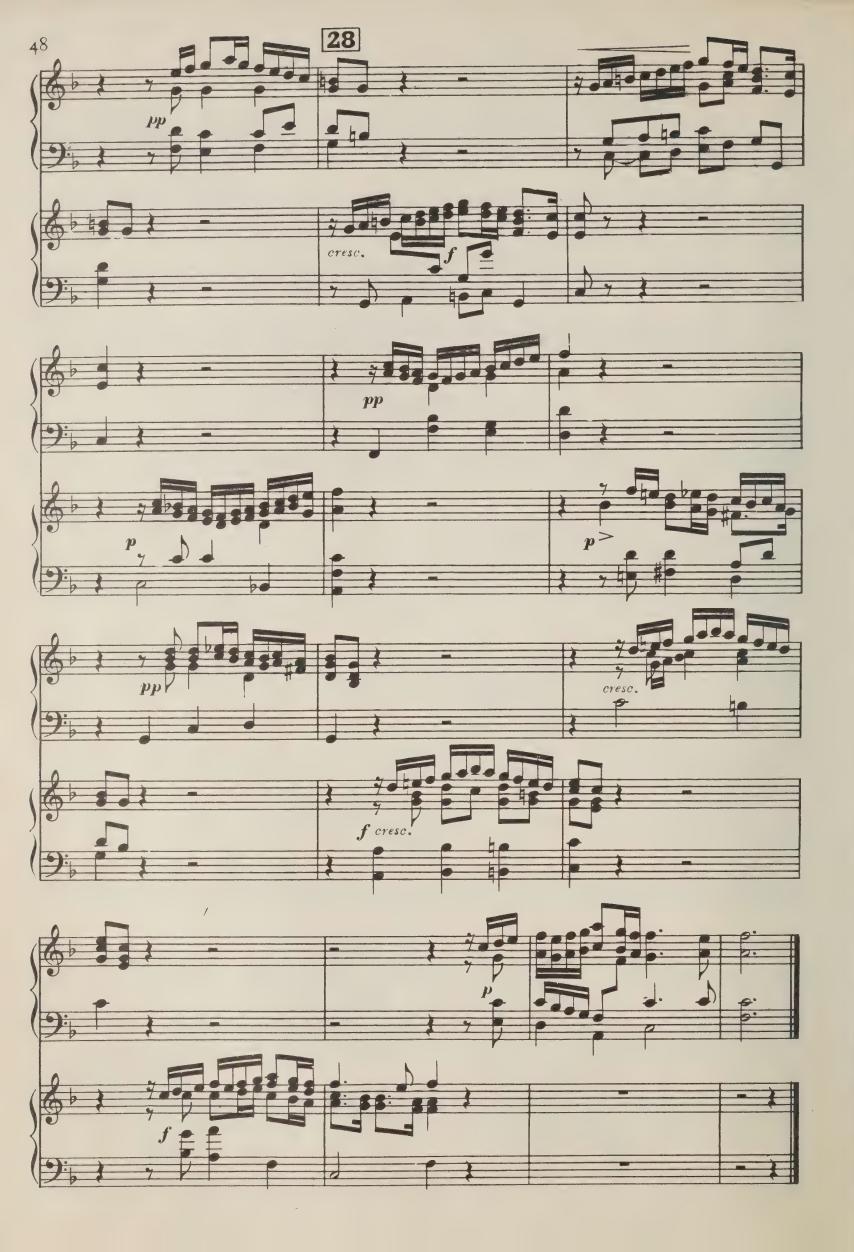








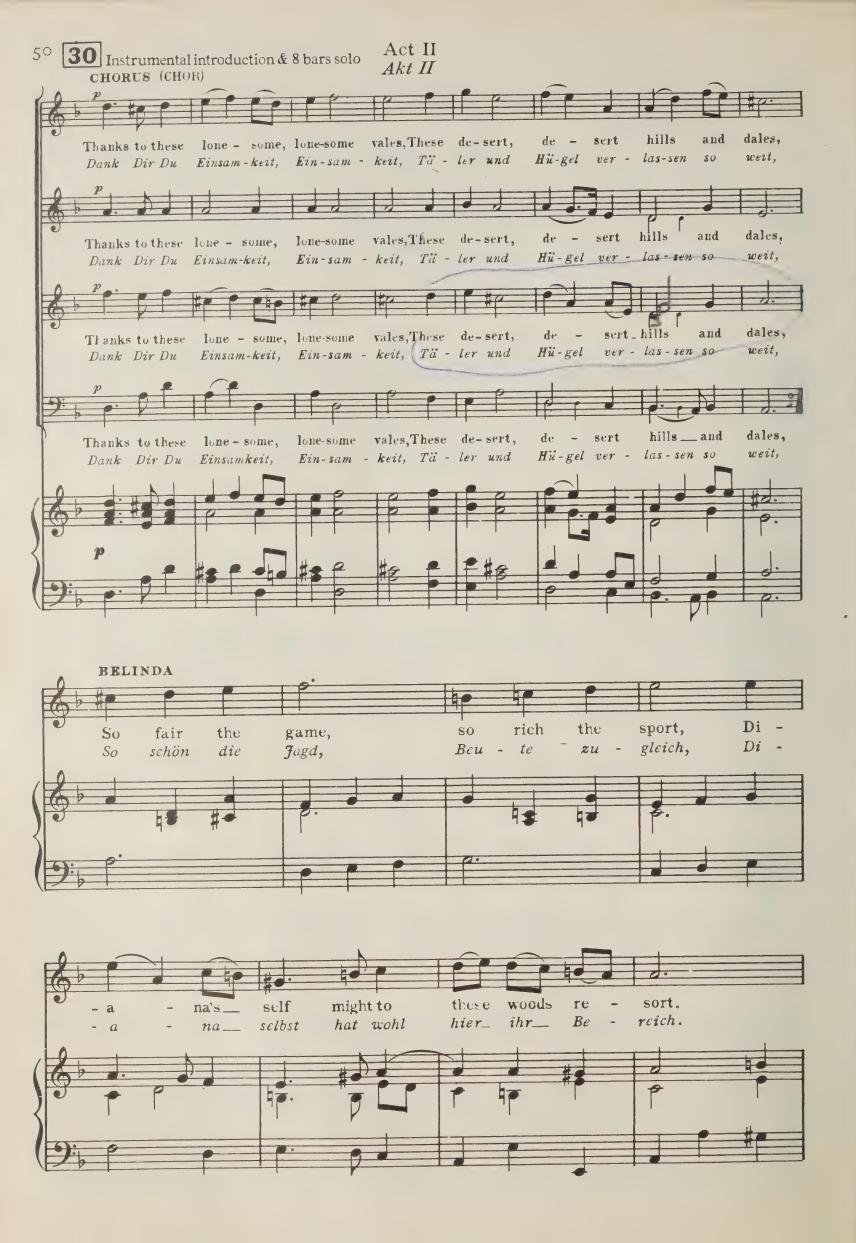


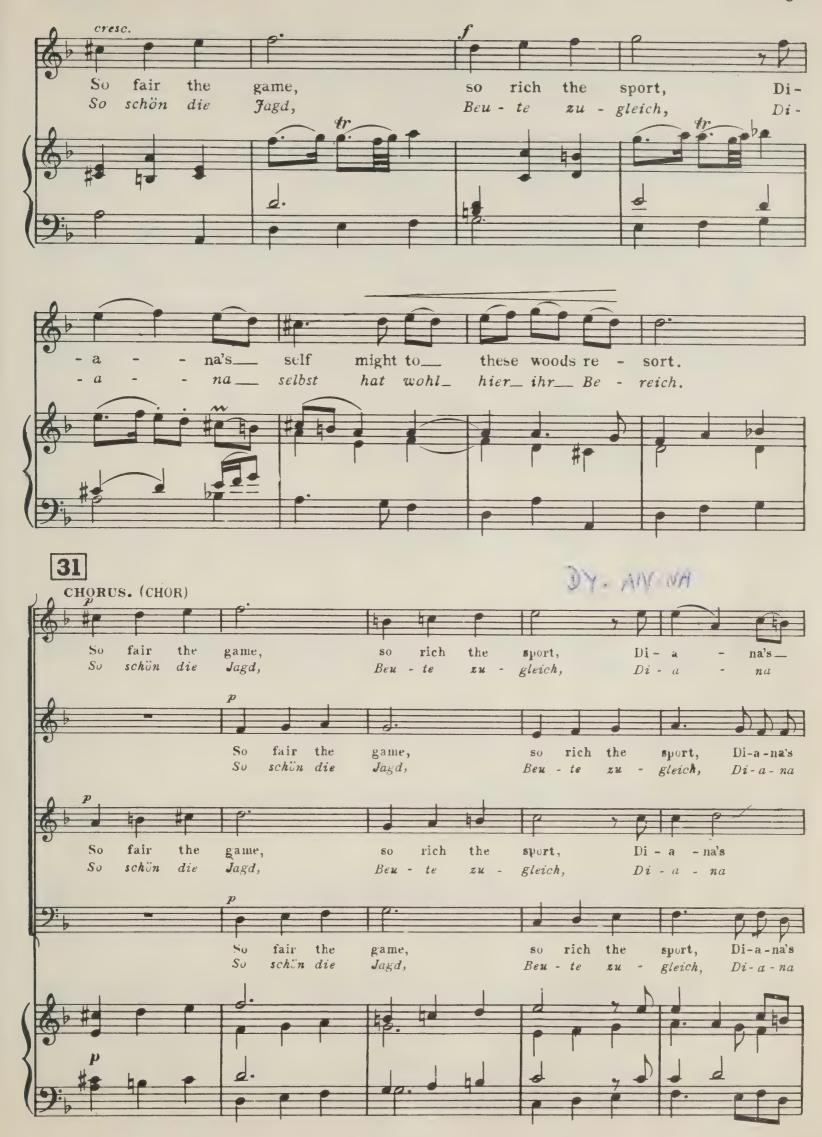


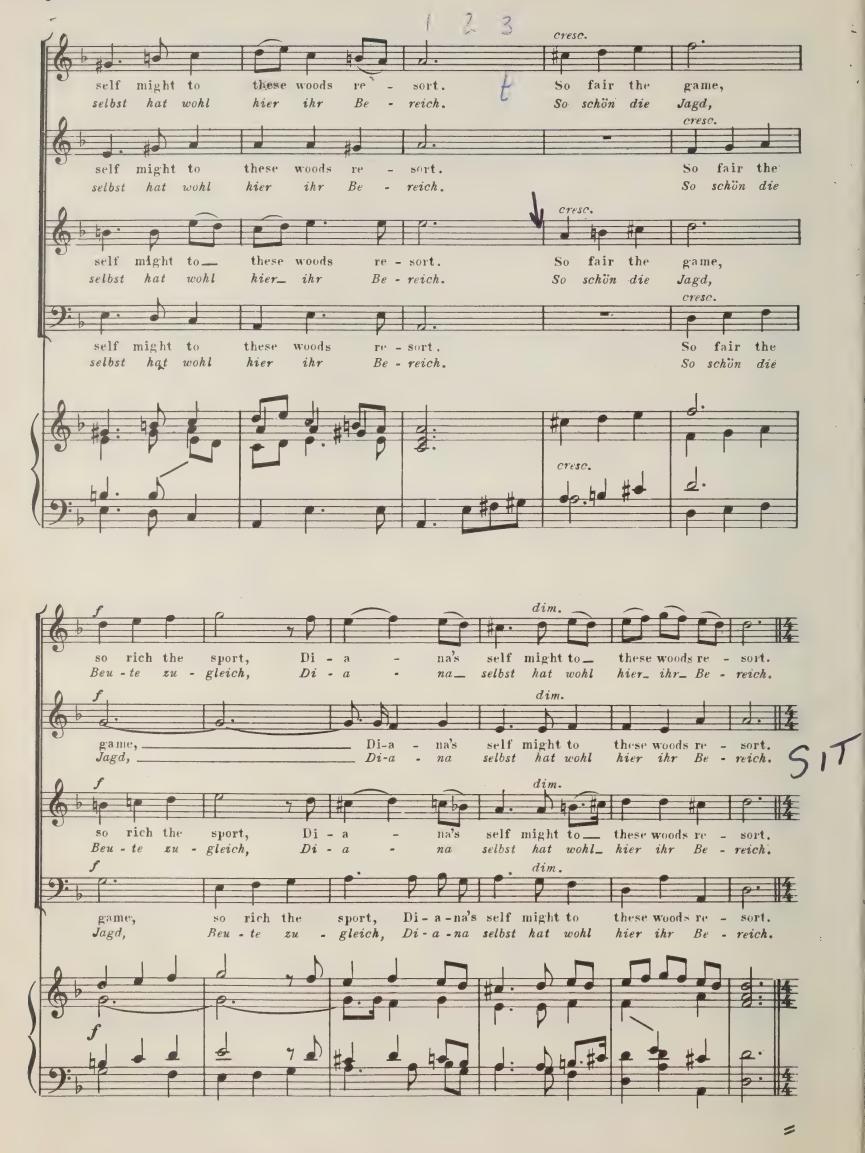




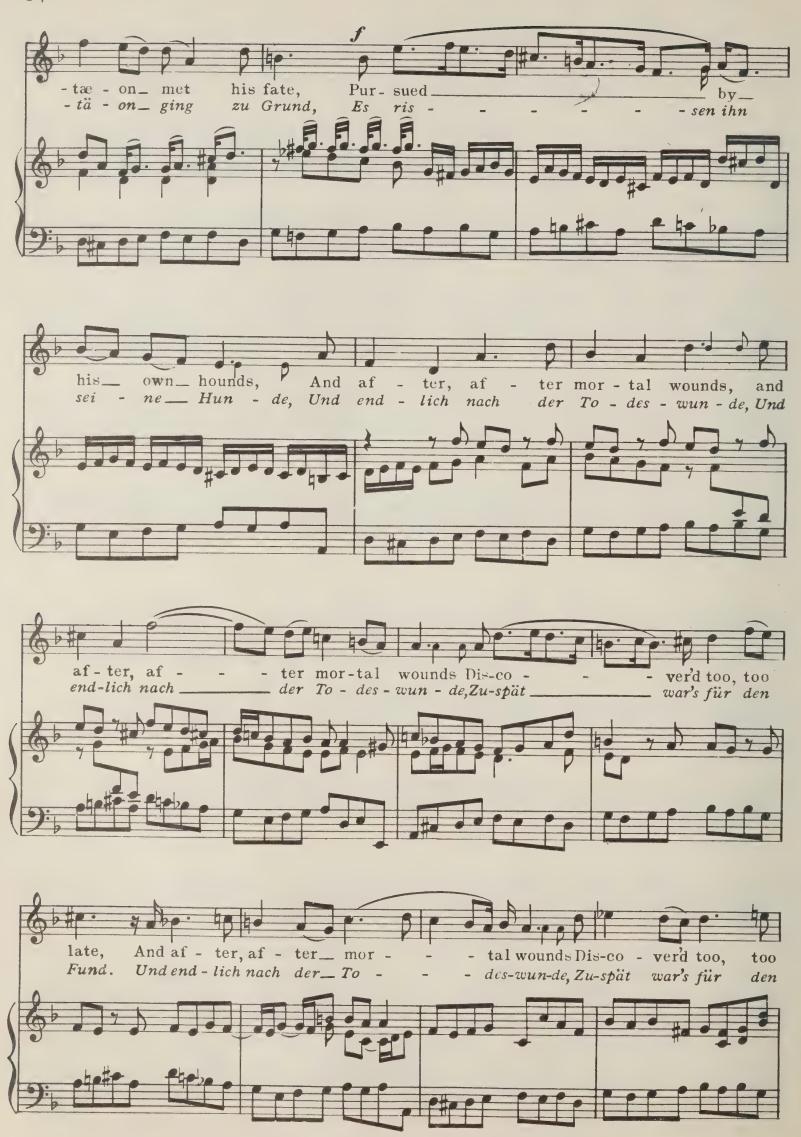
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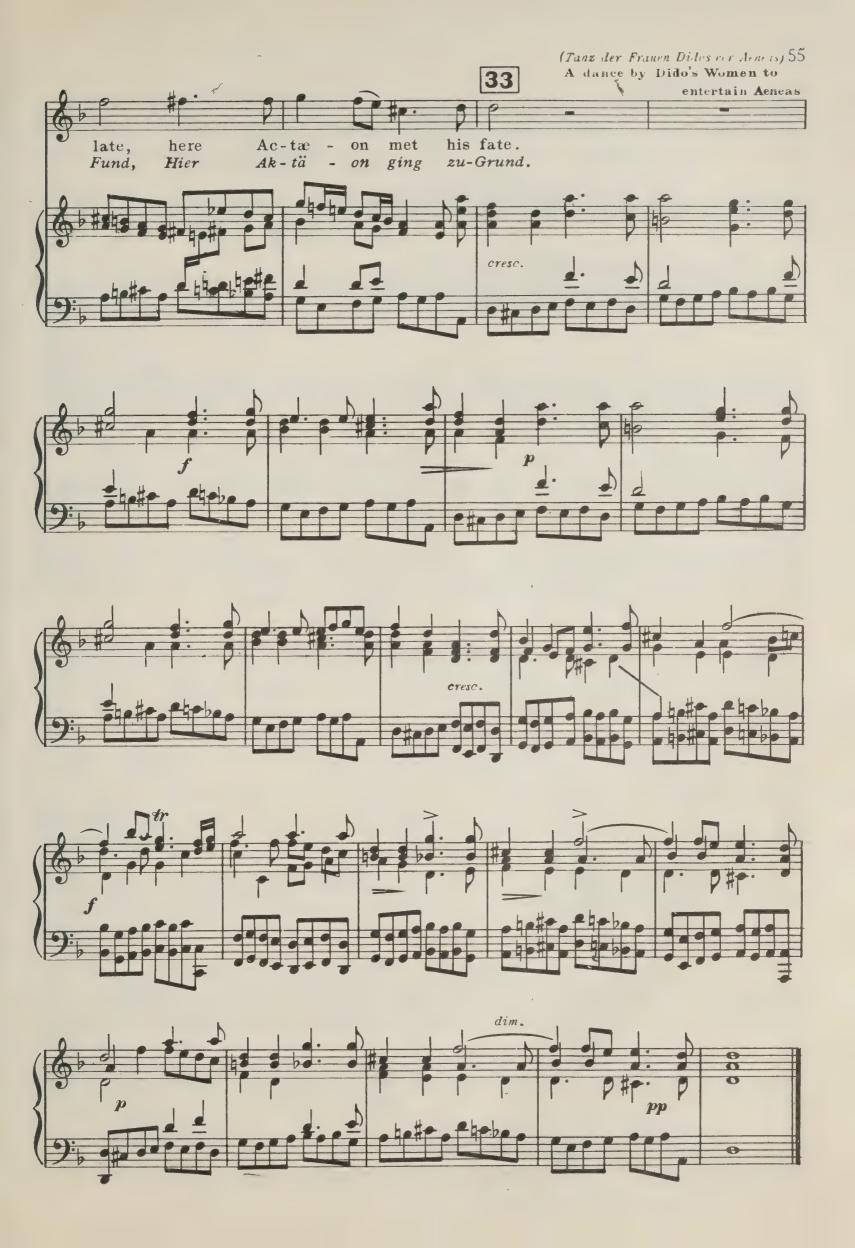




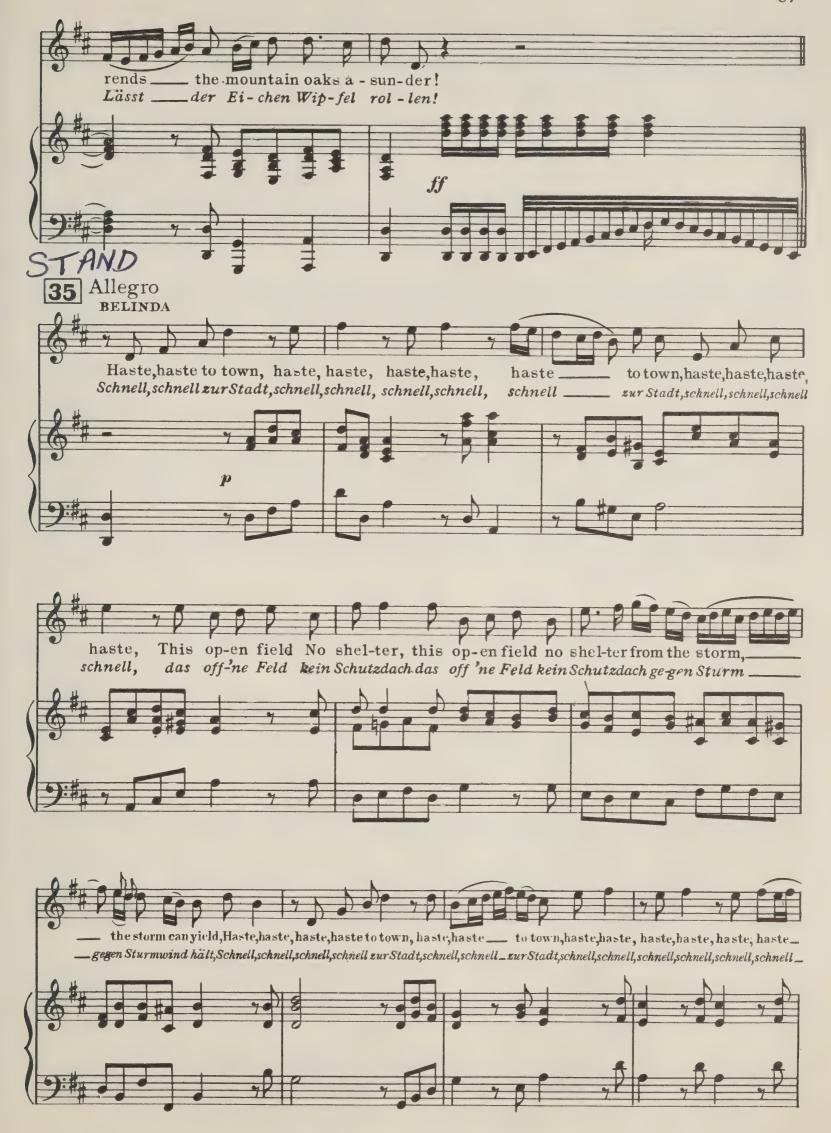


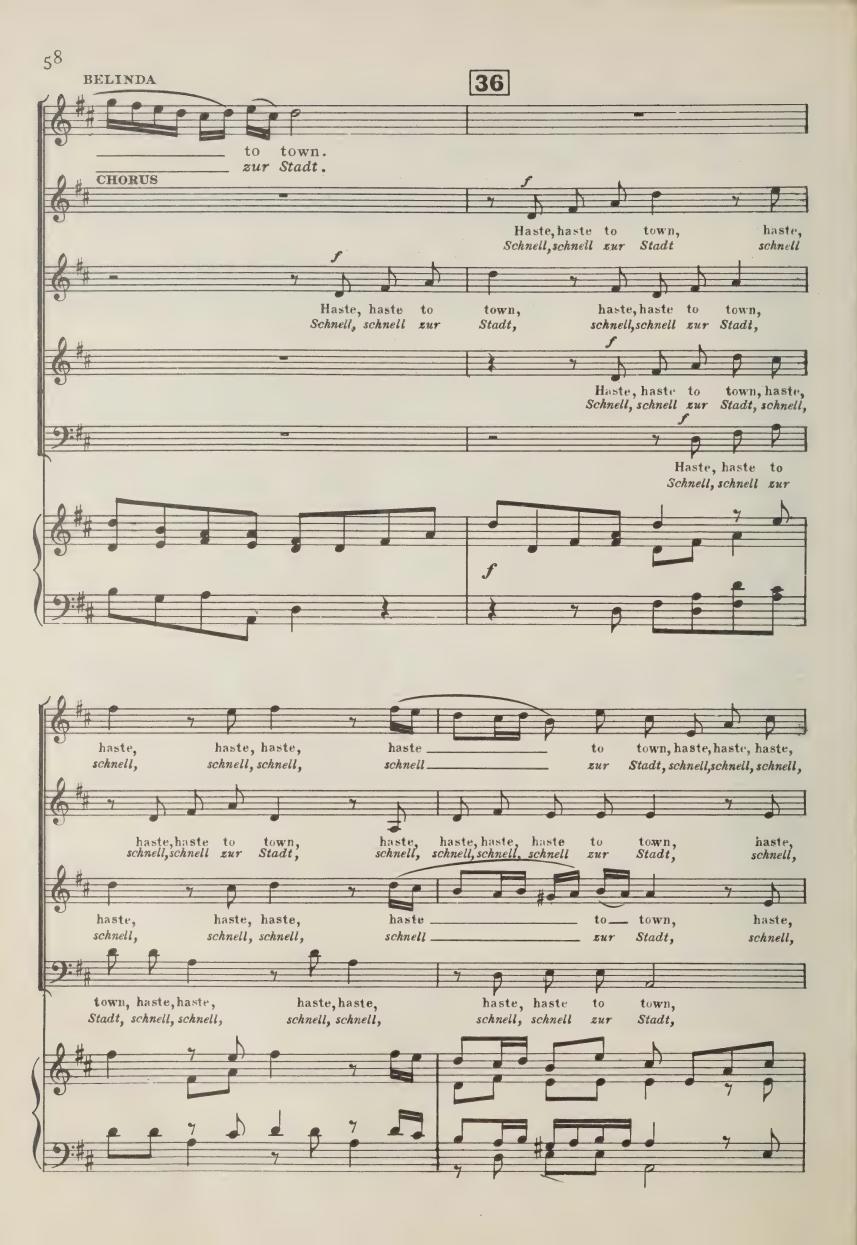


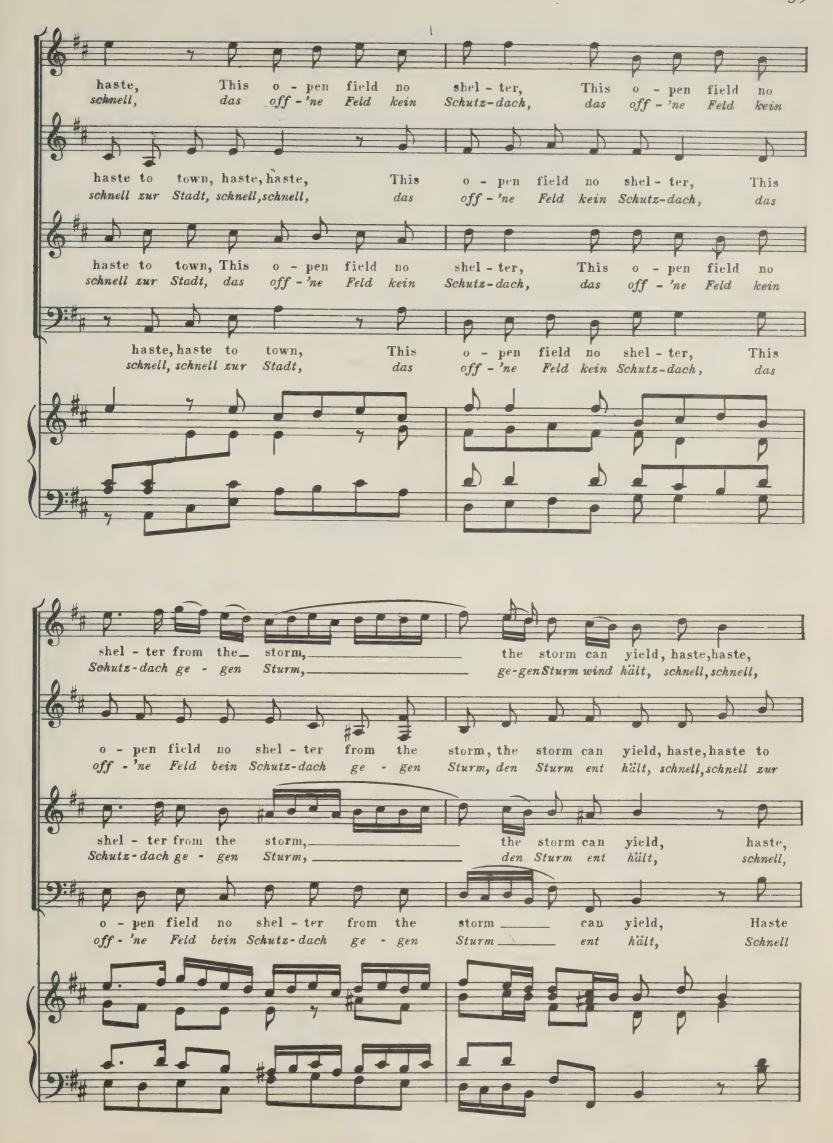


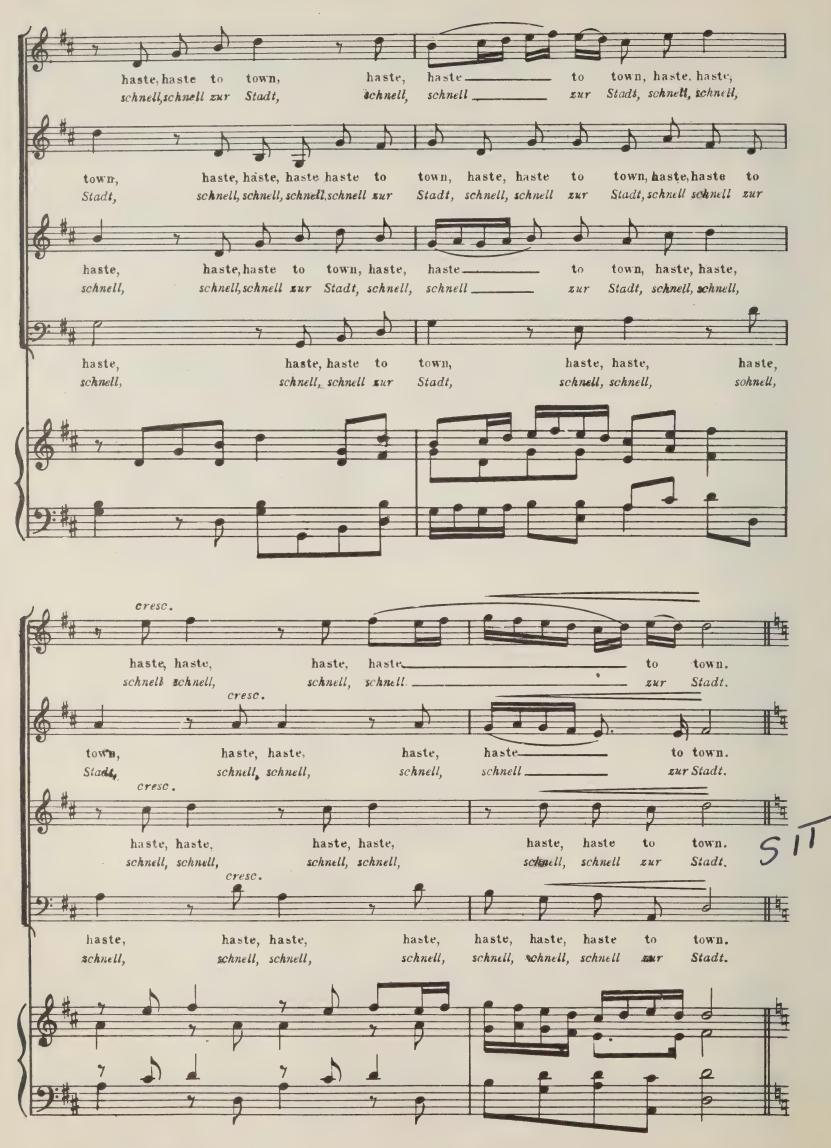




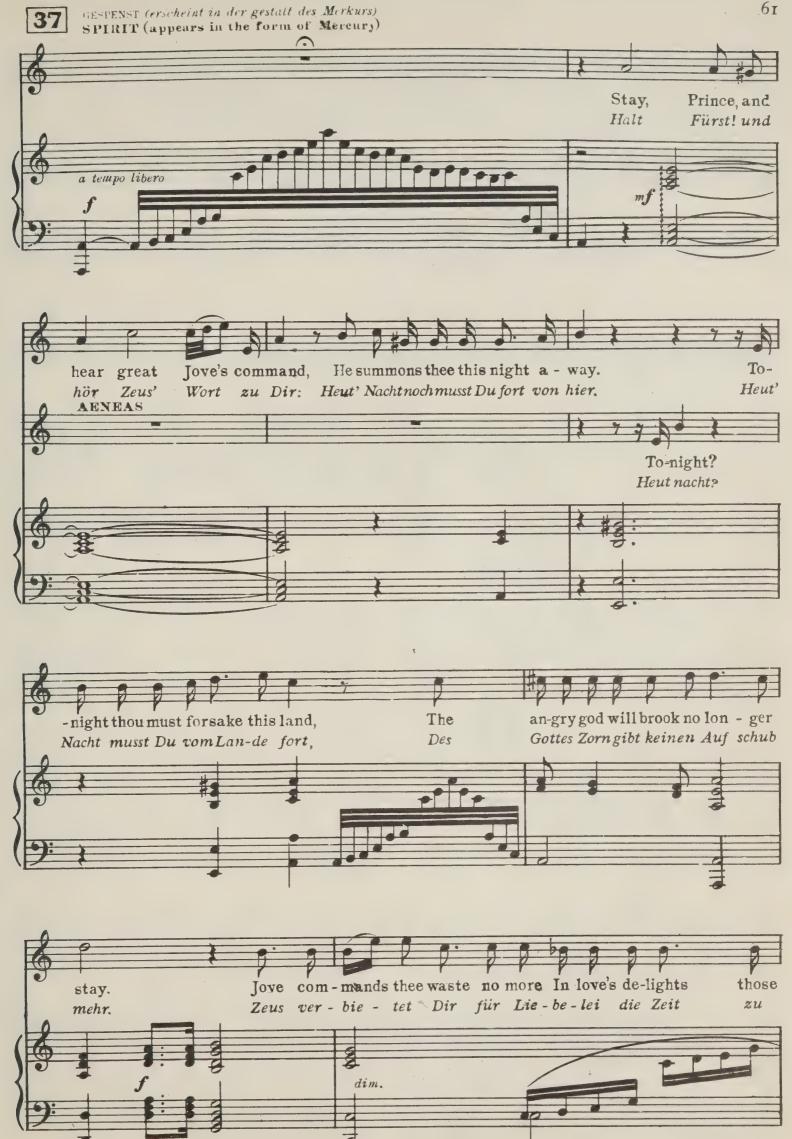


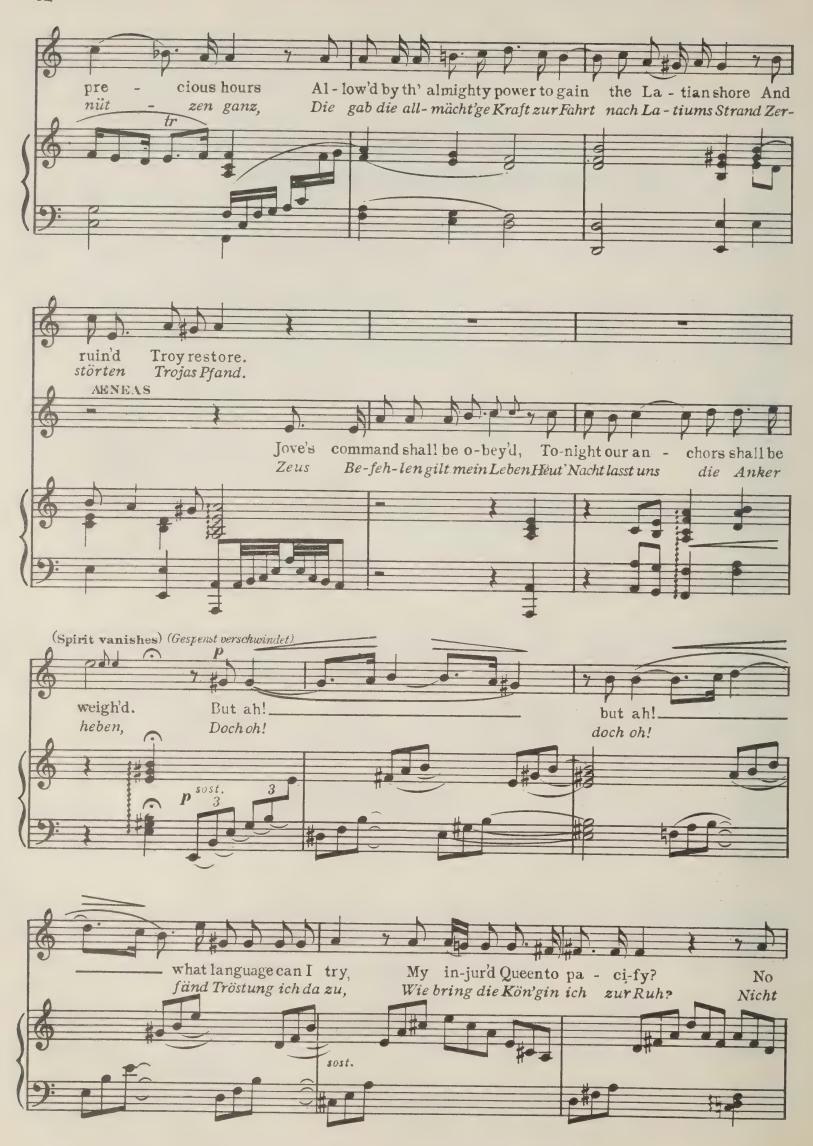


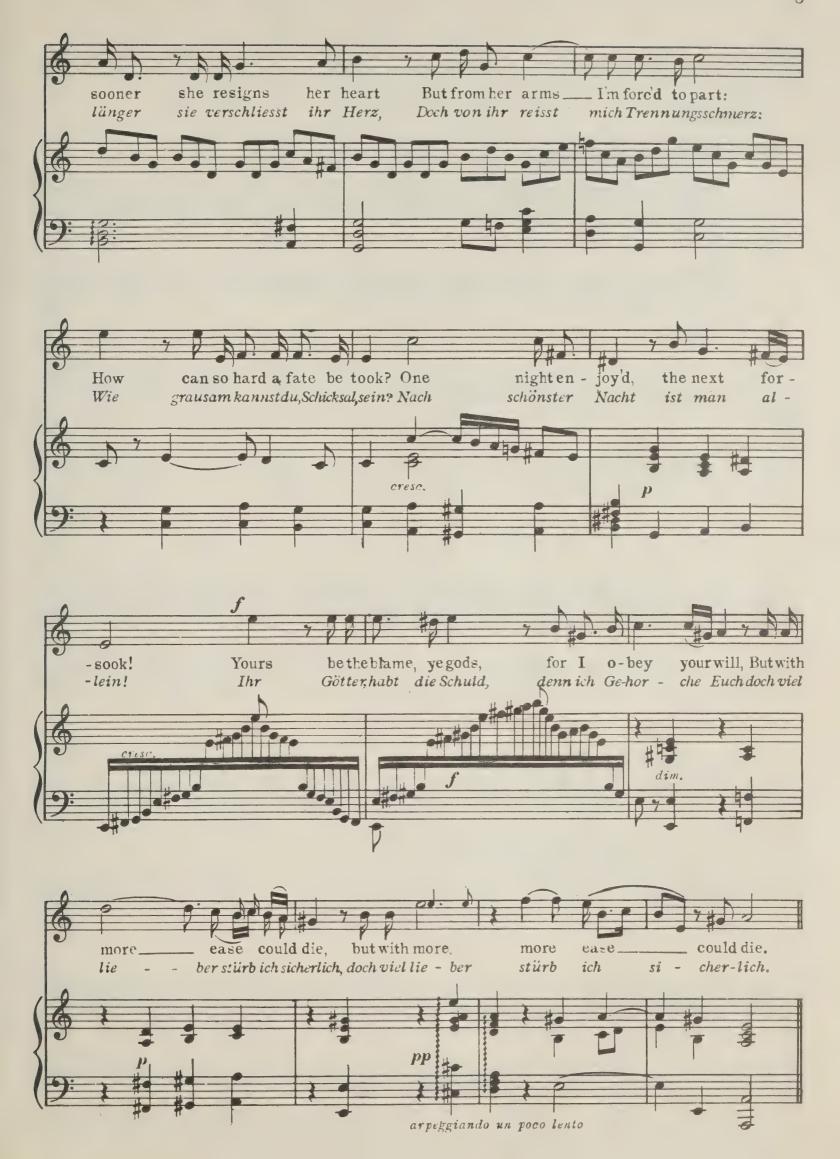




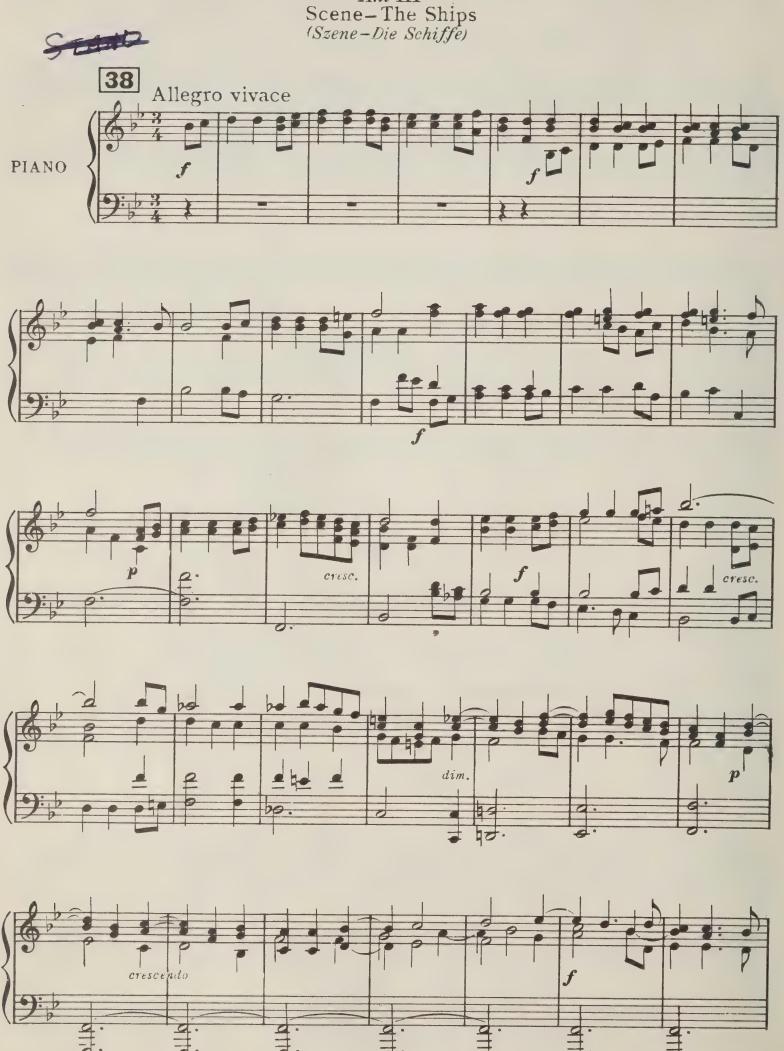


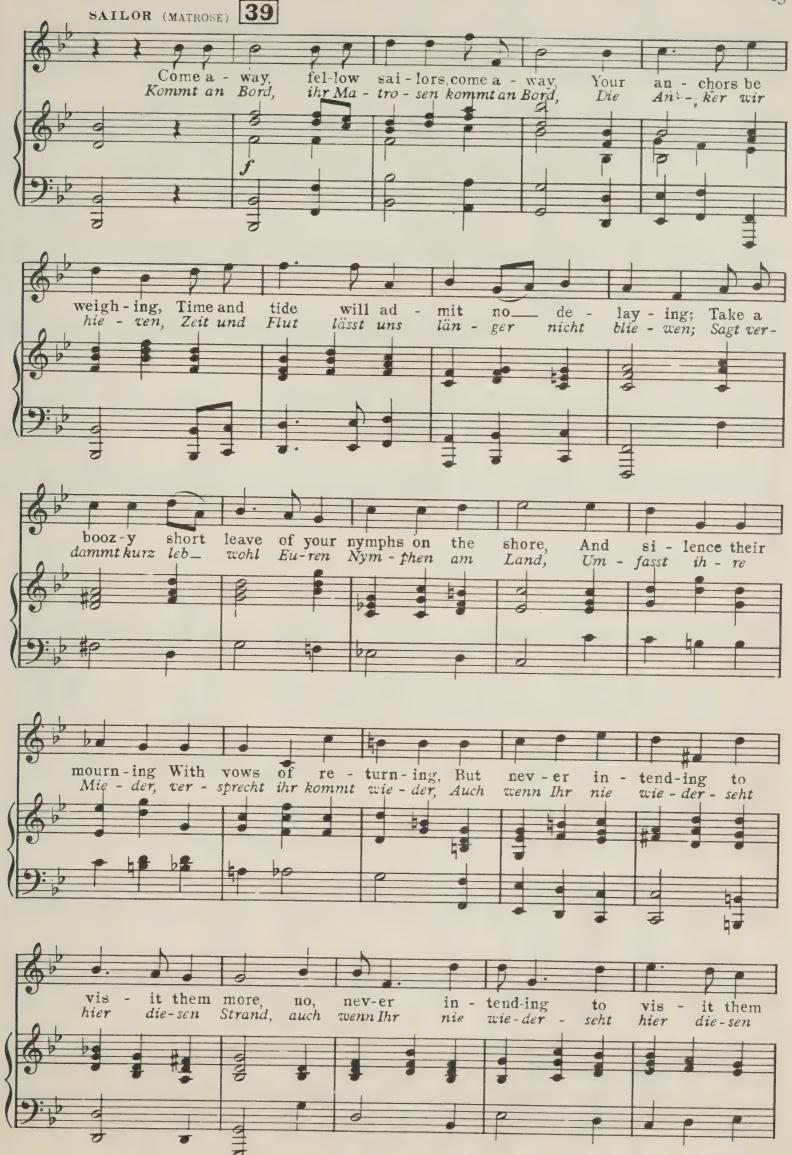


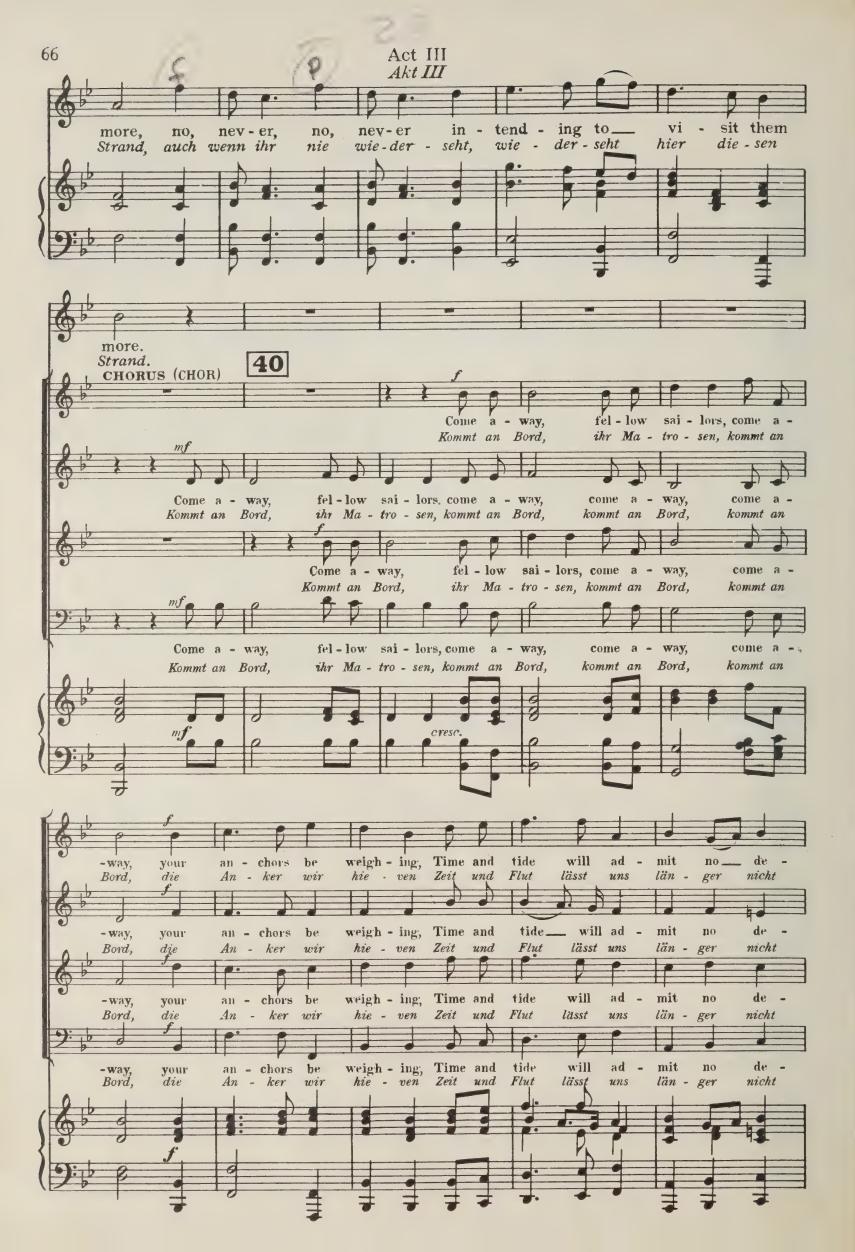


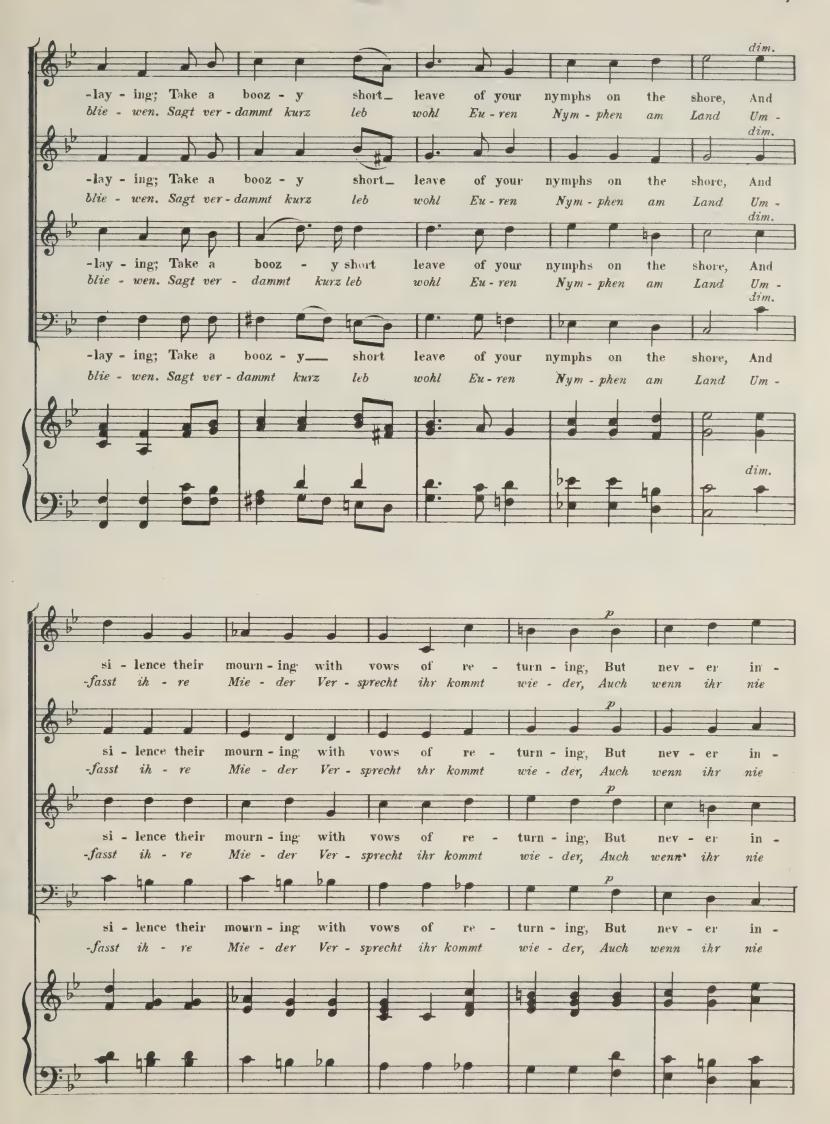


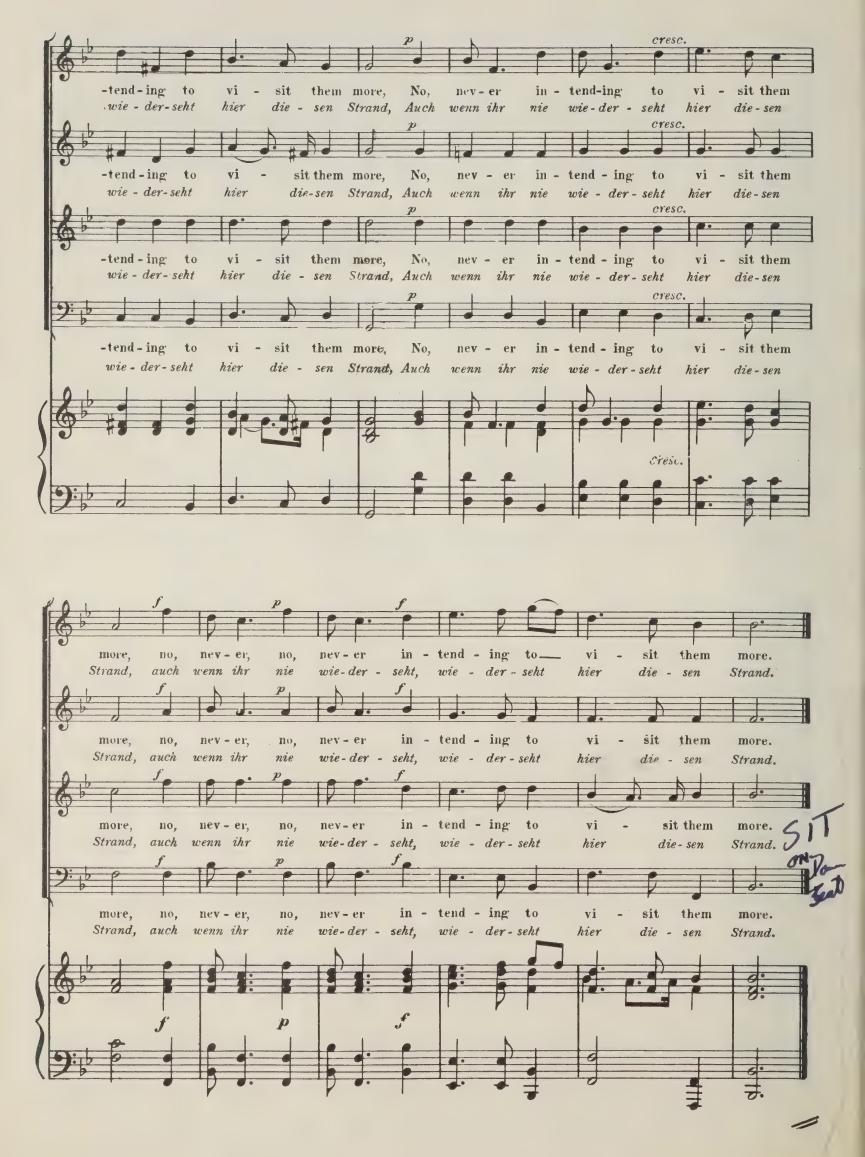
Akt III
Scene-The Ships
(Szene-Die Schiffe)





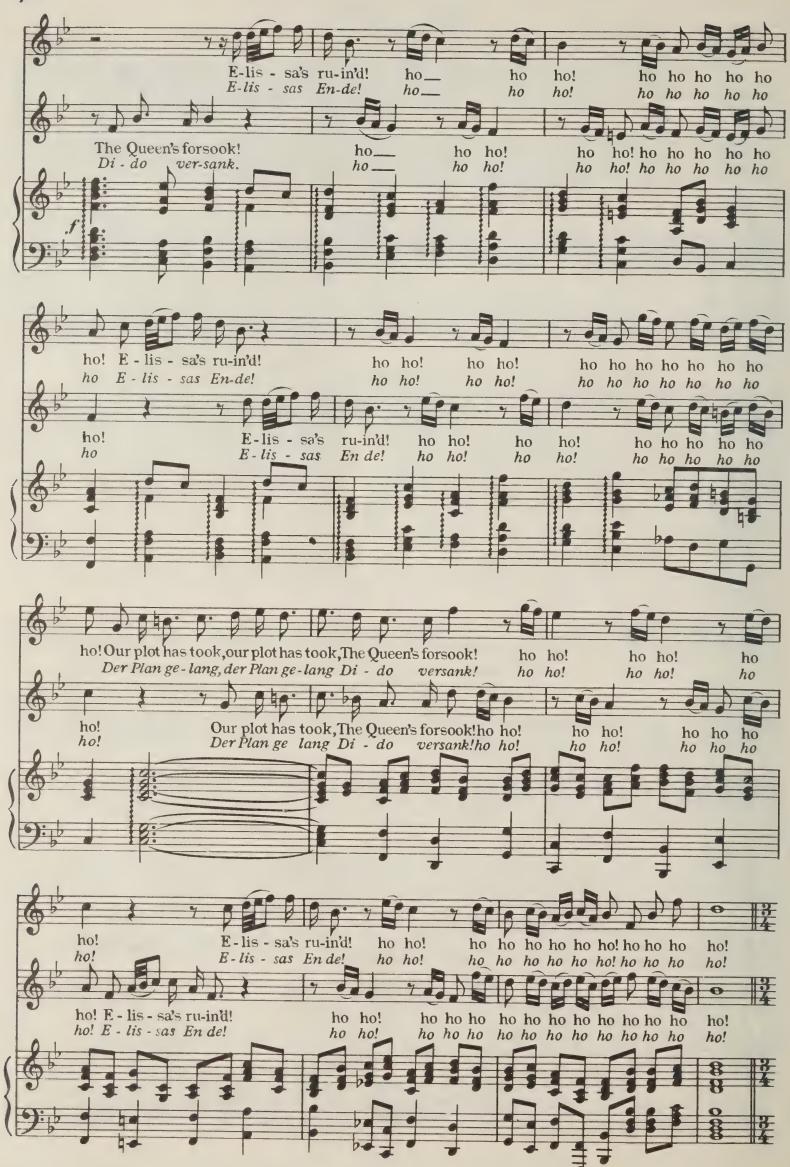


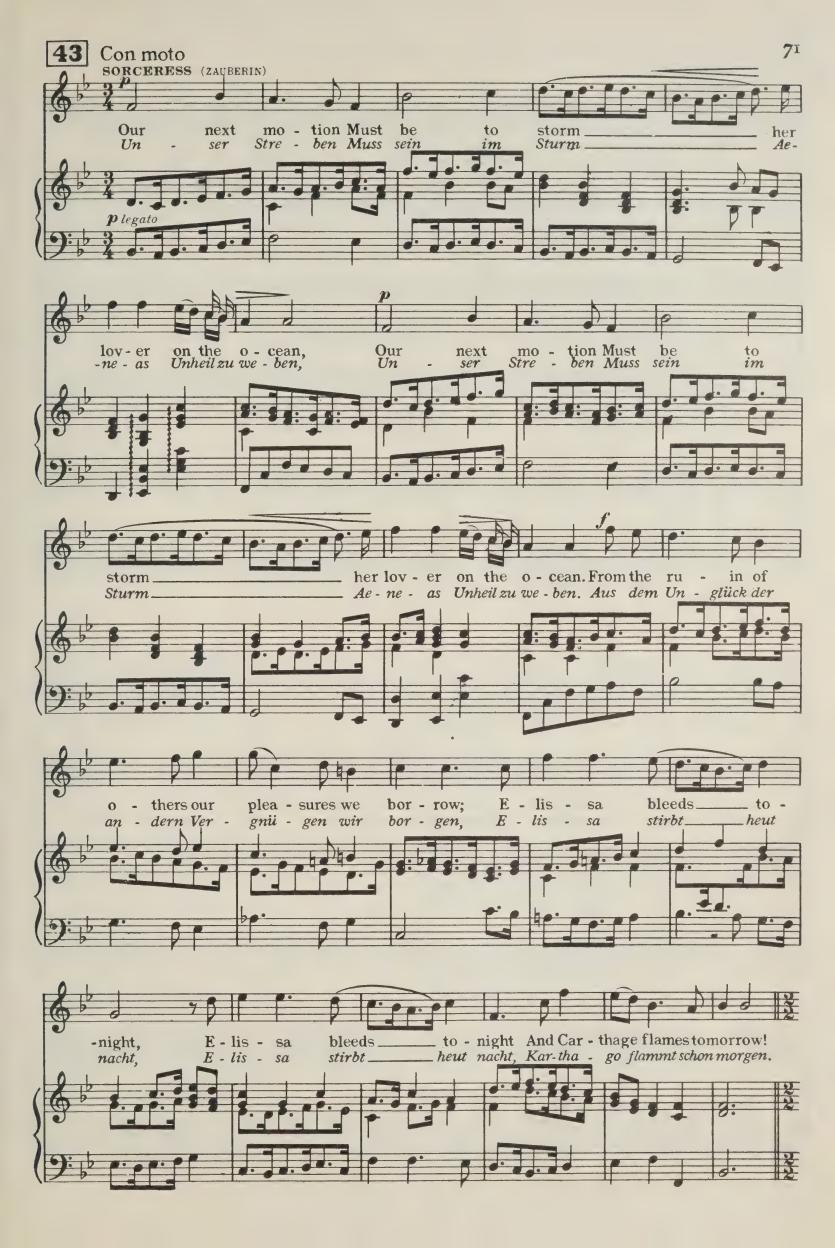


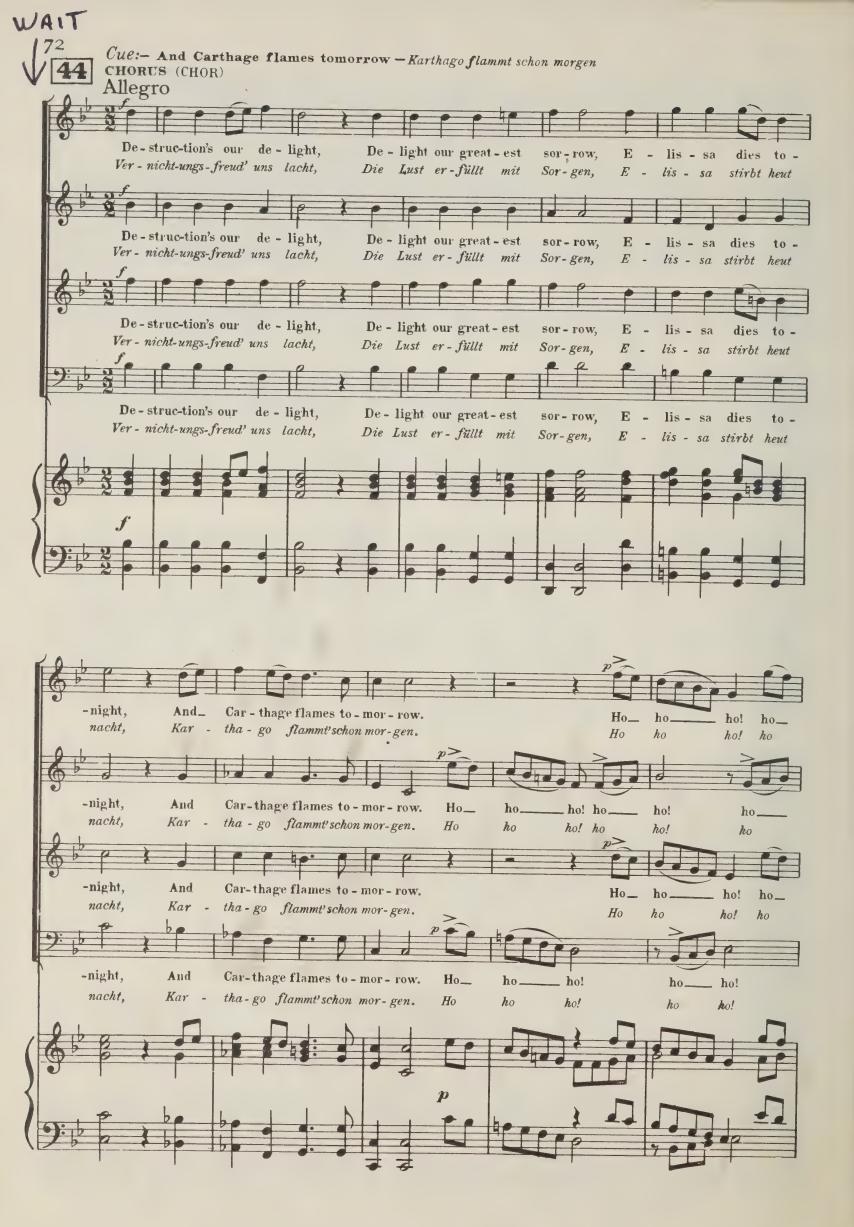


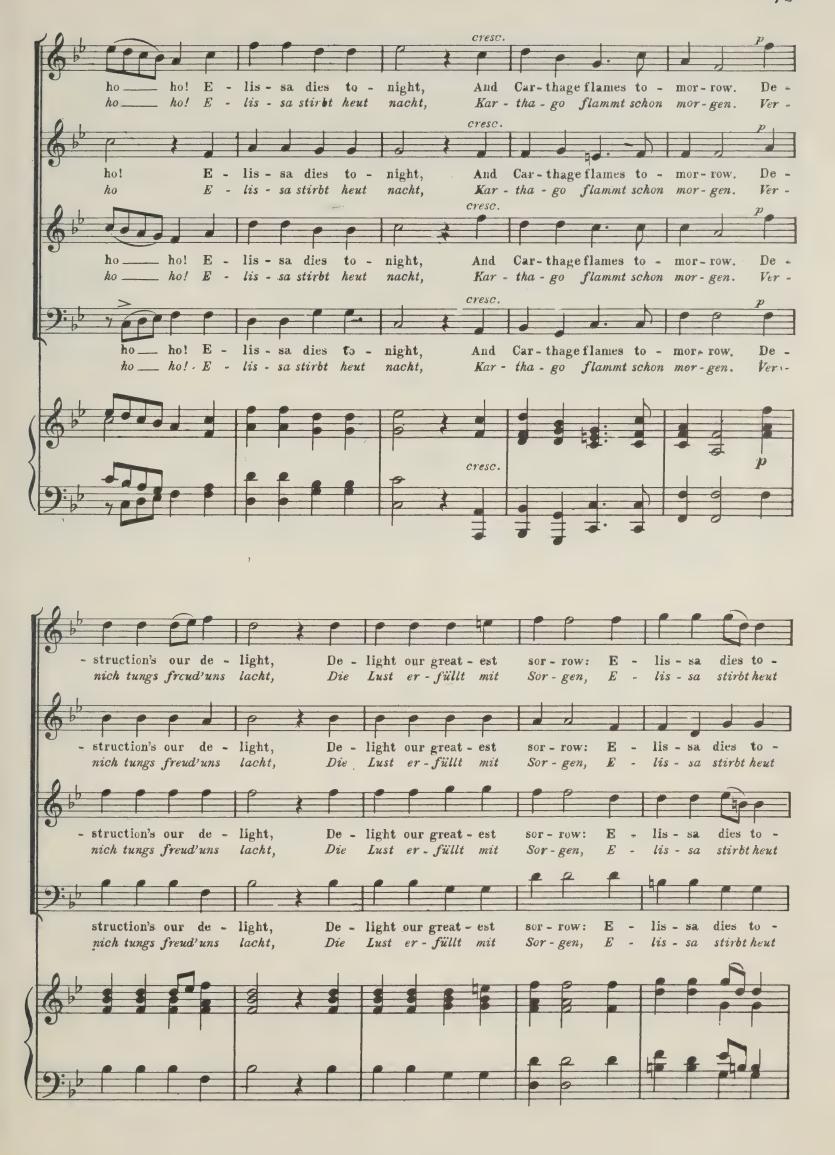


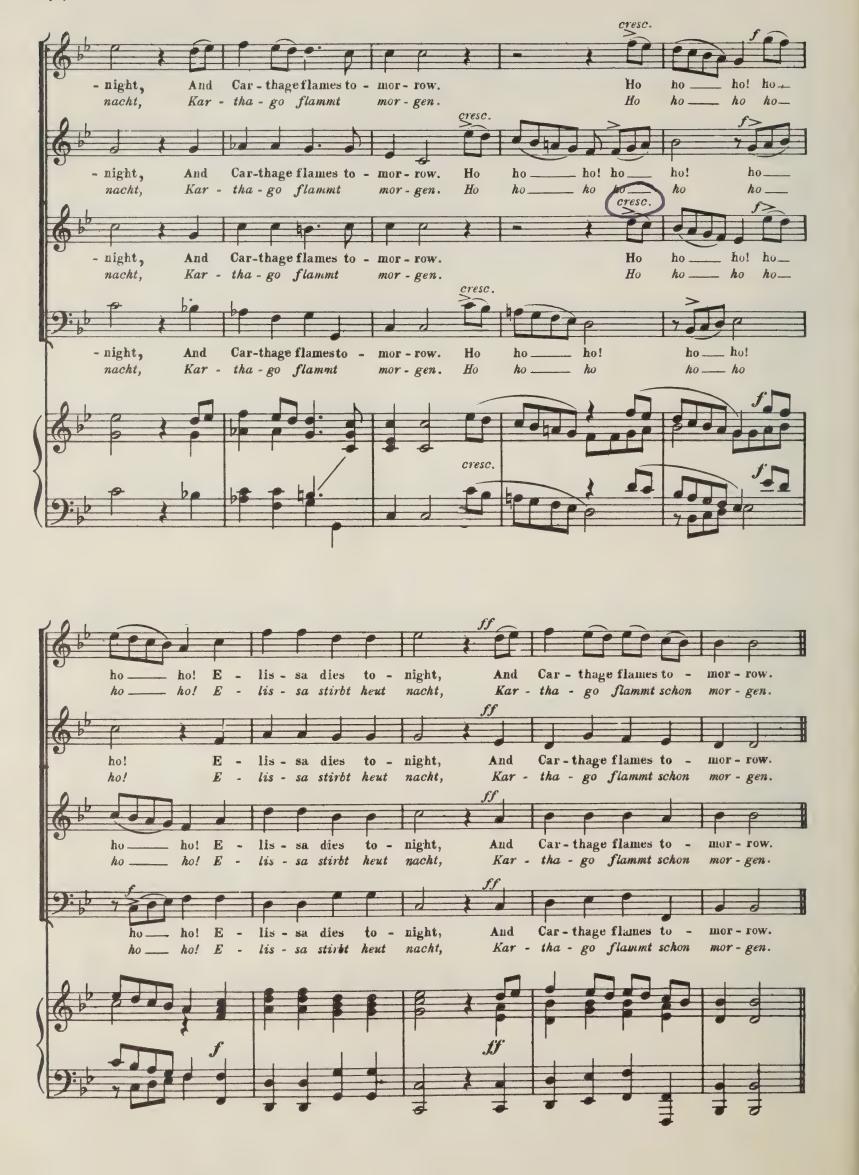


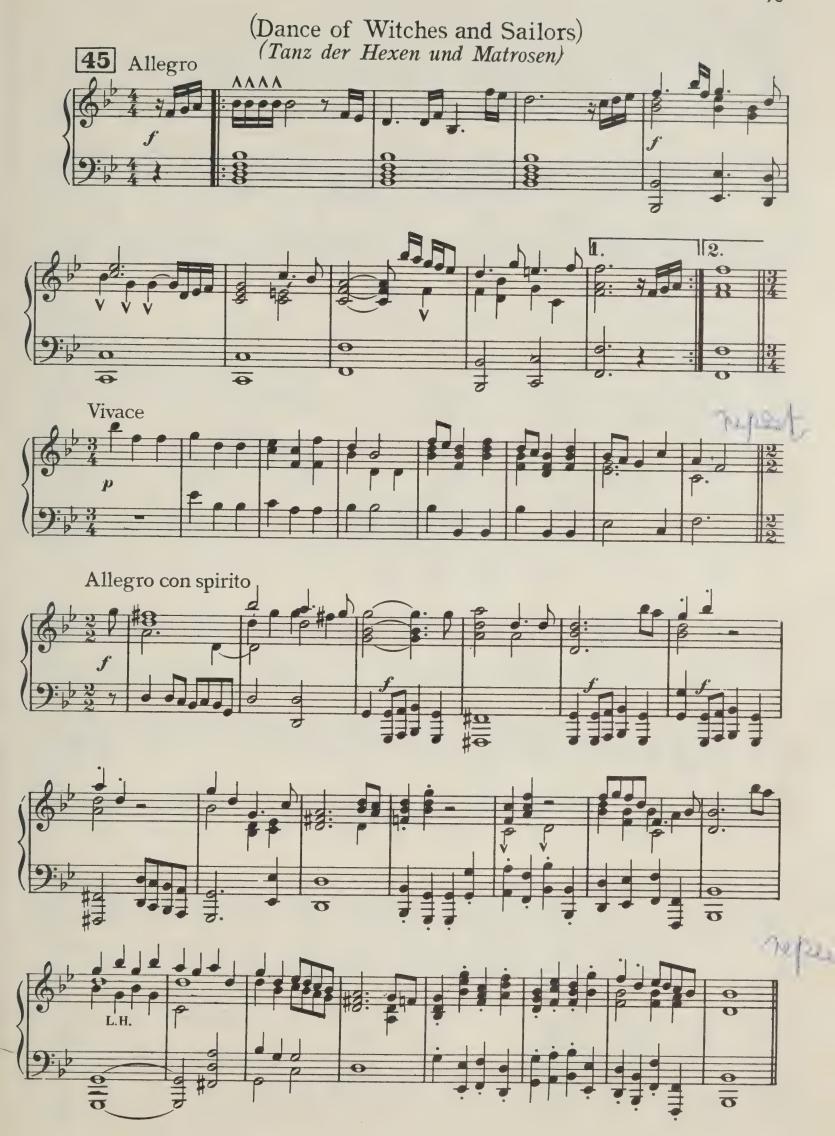


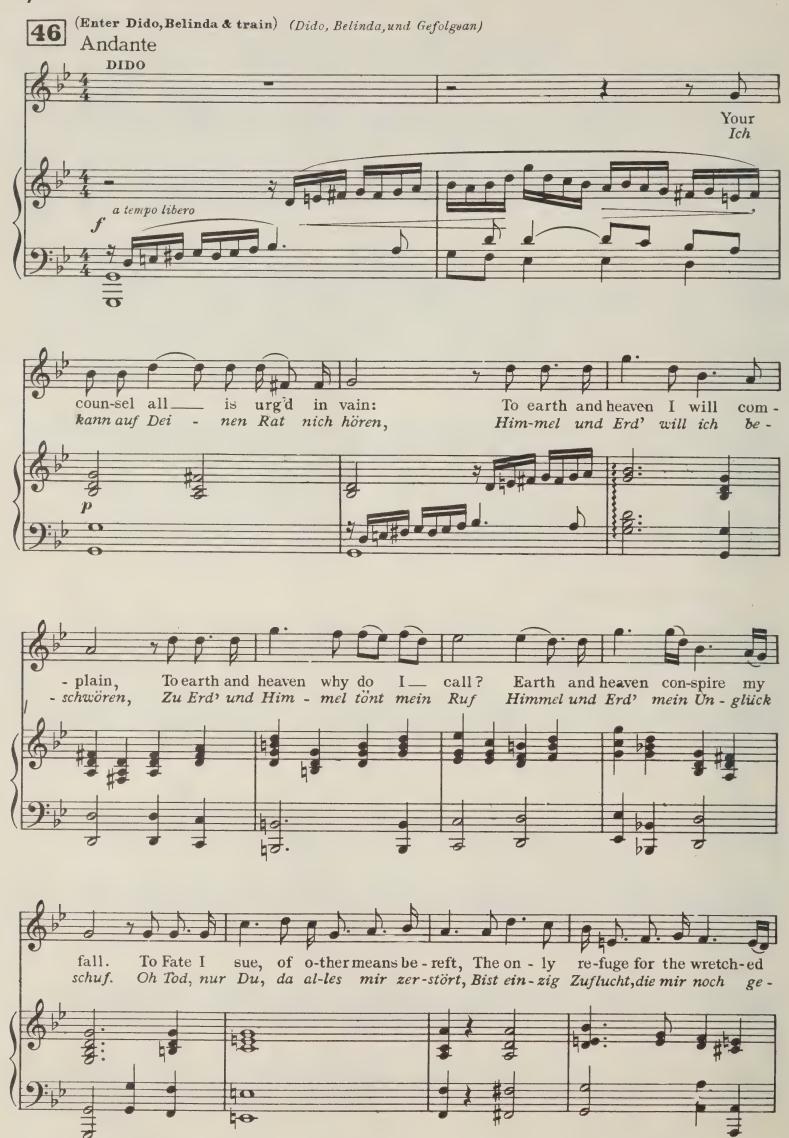




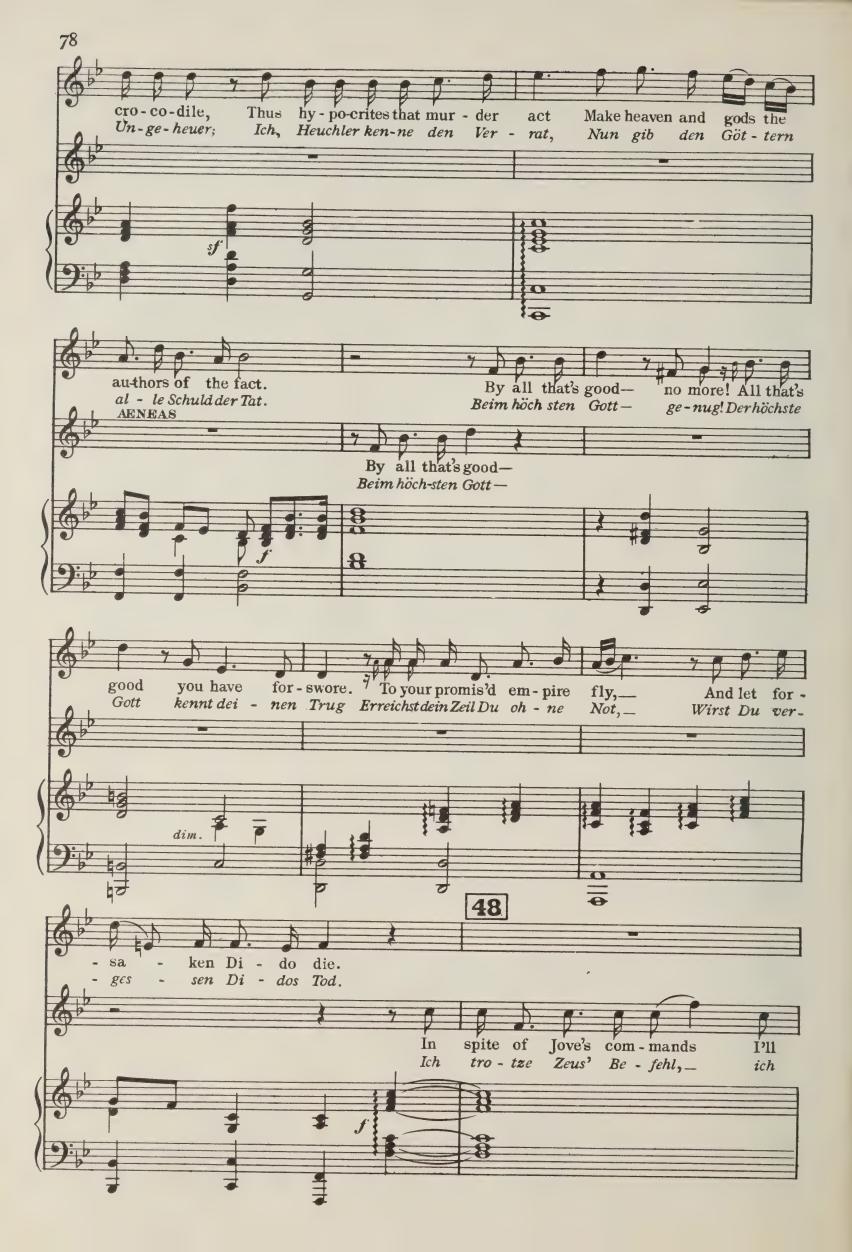


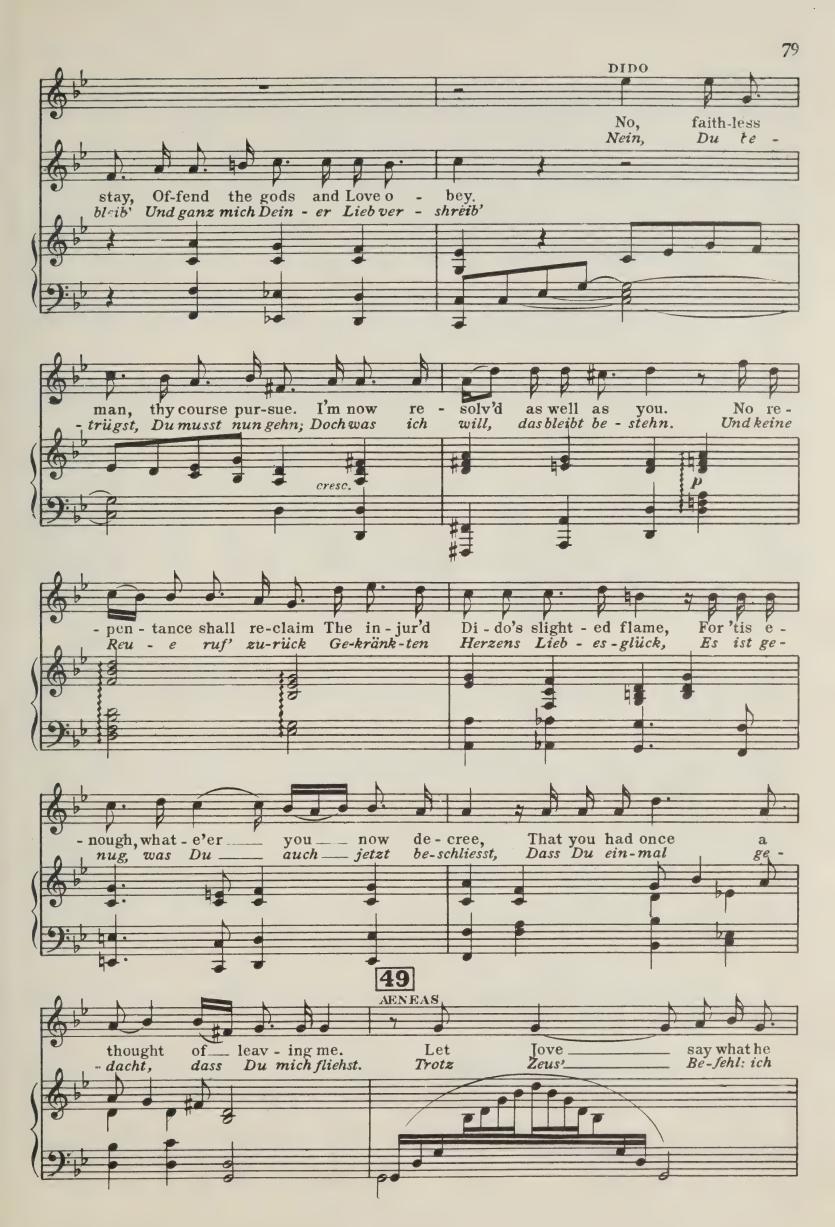


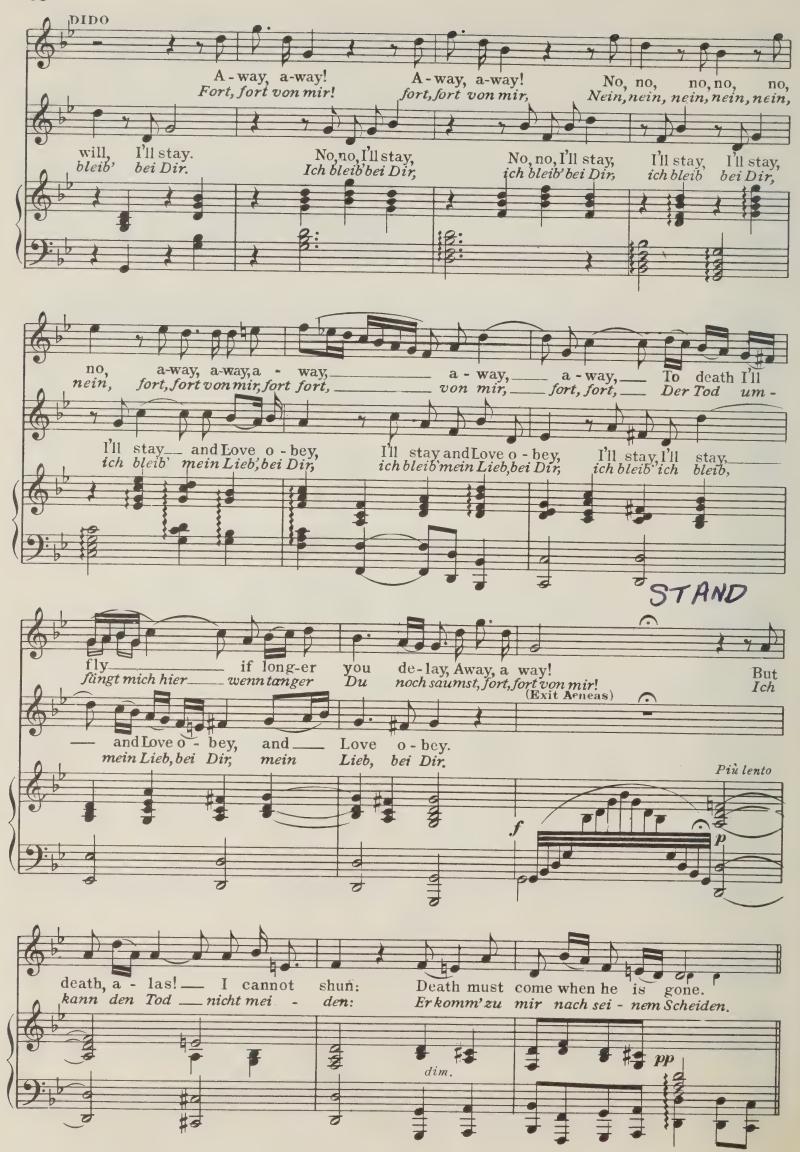




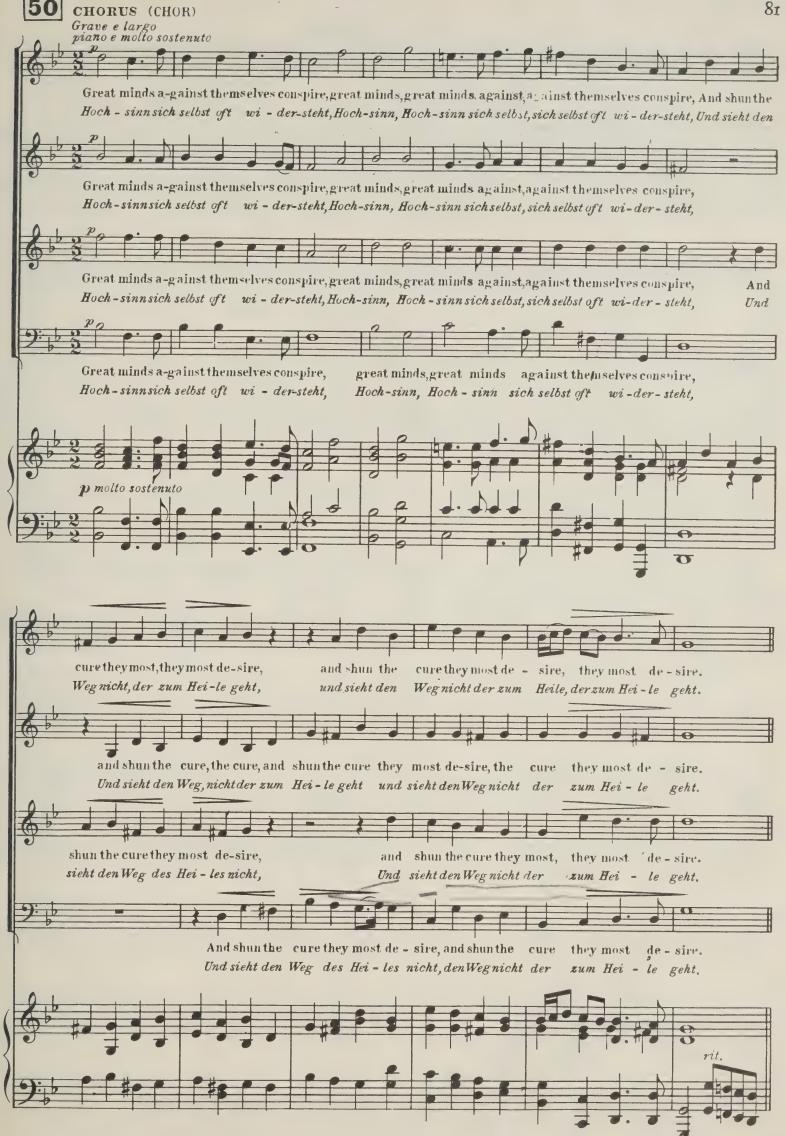


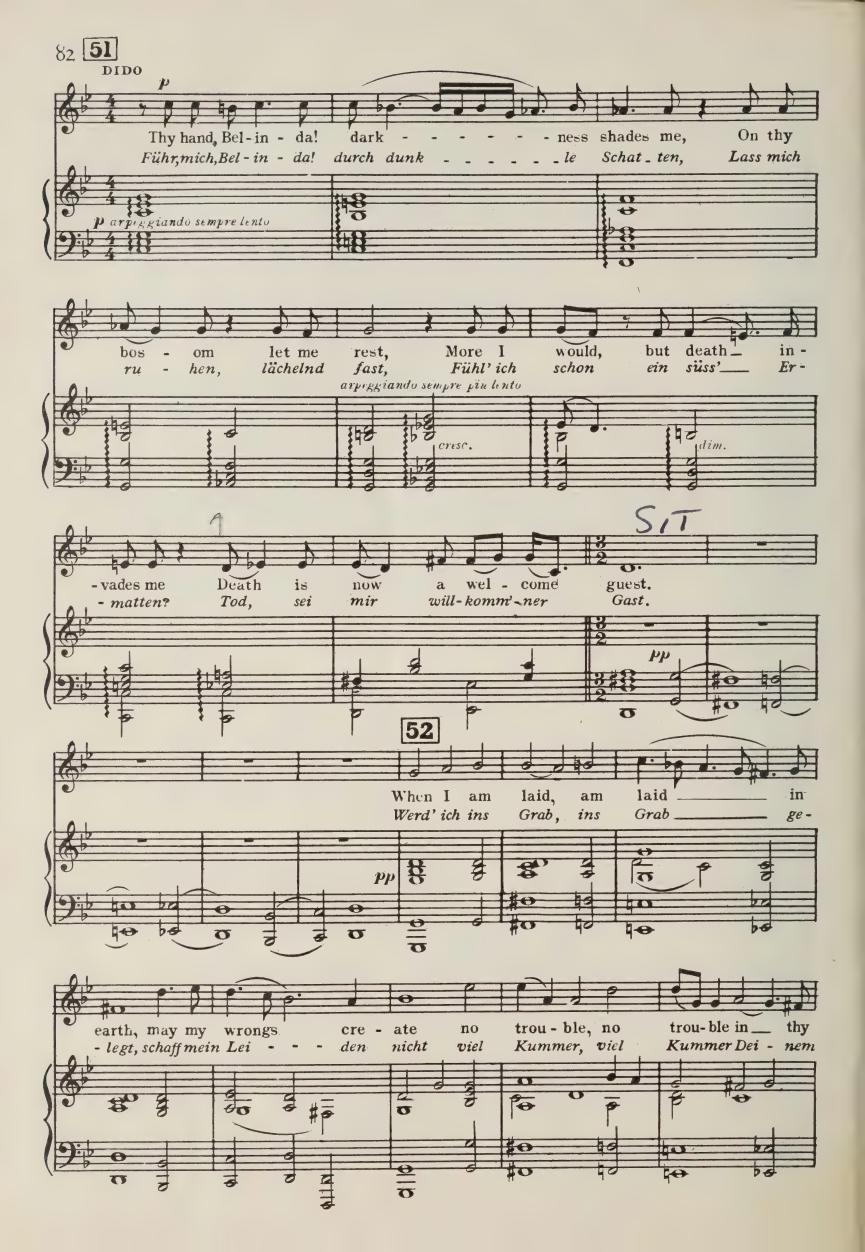




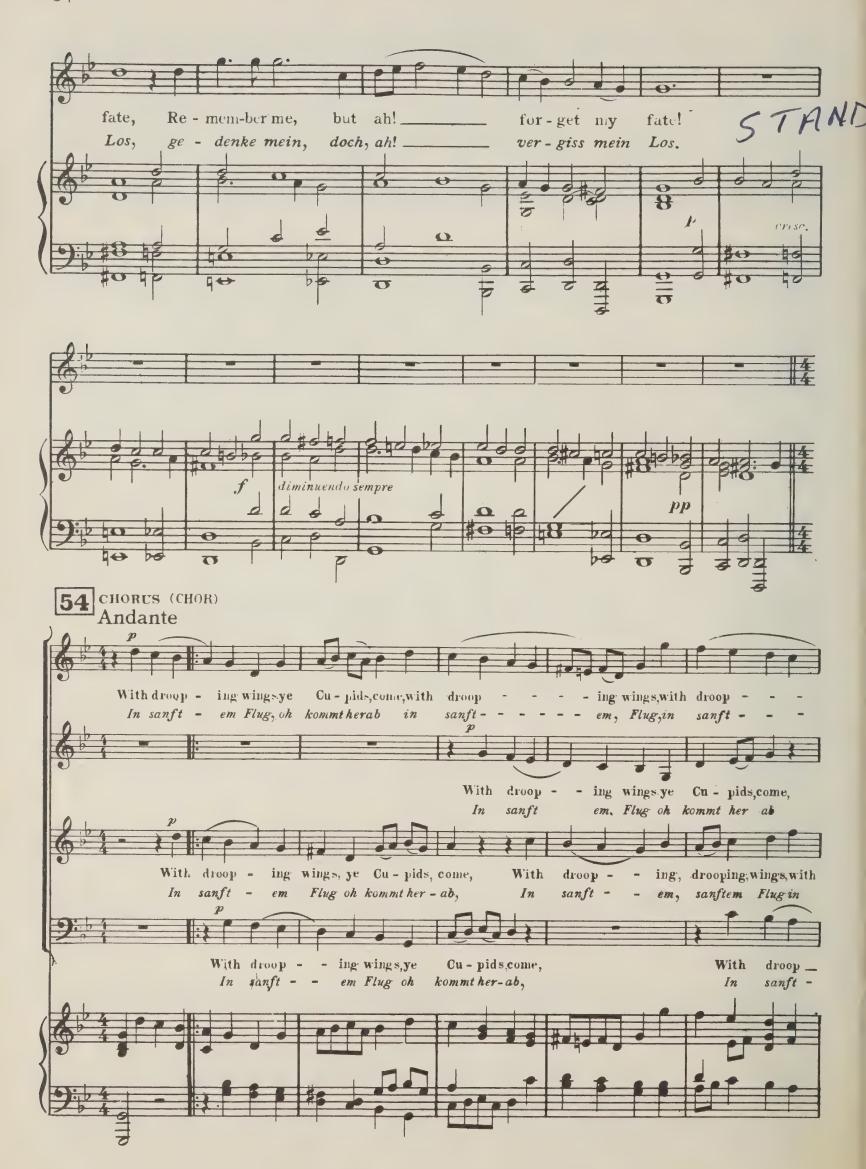


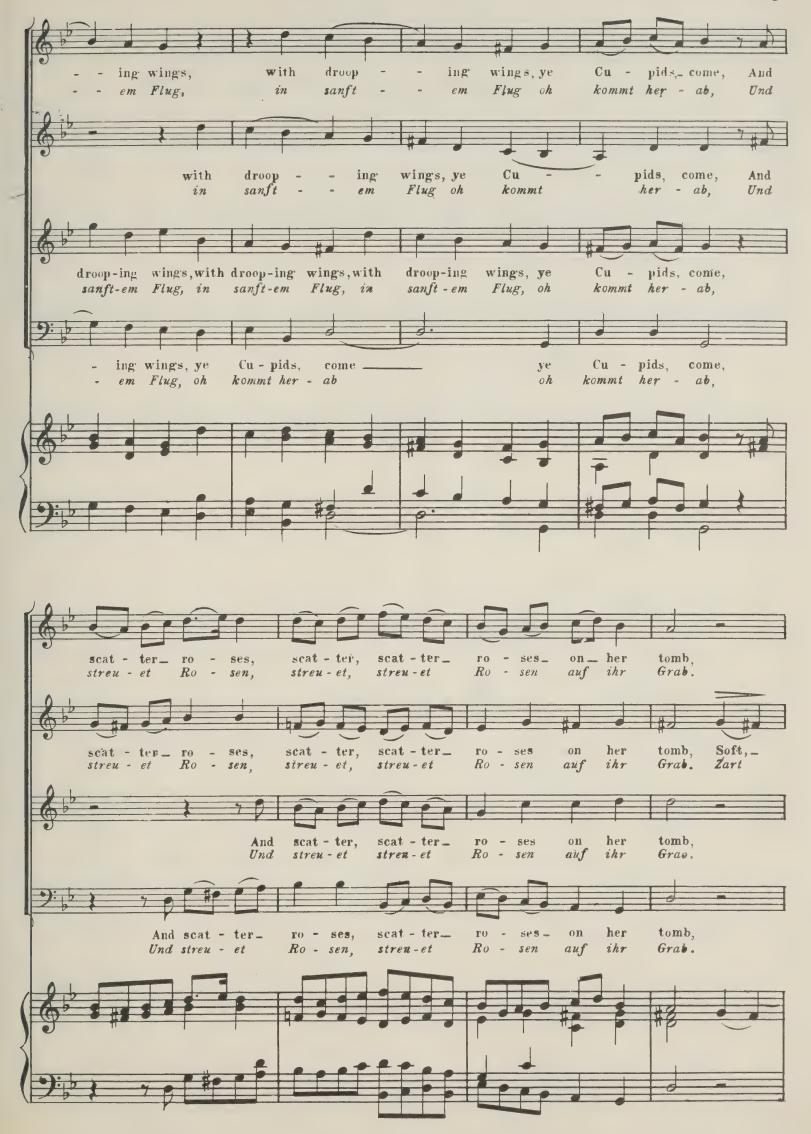


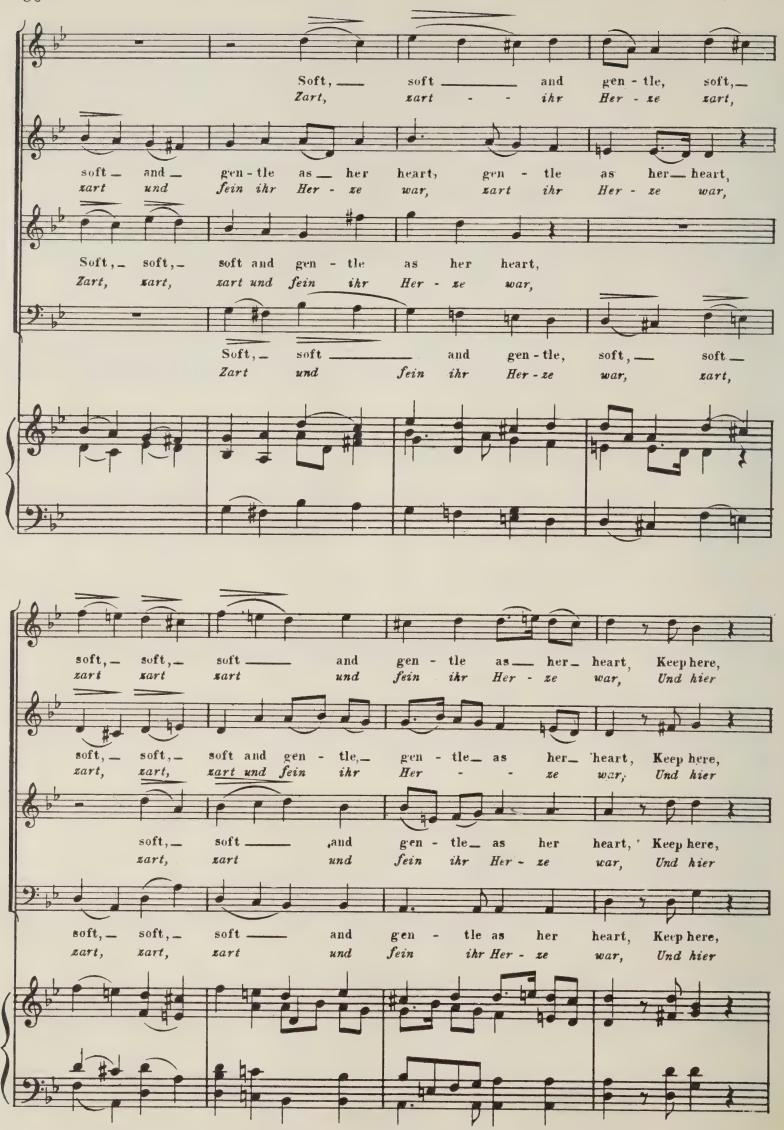


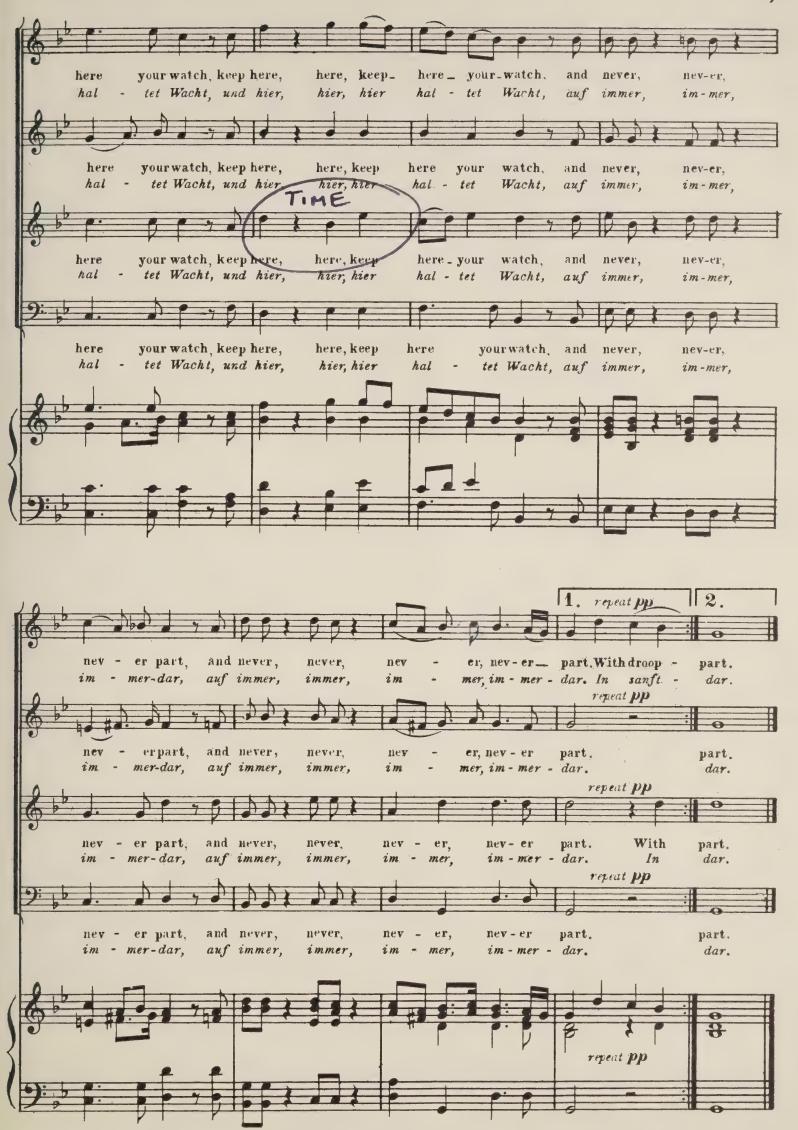




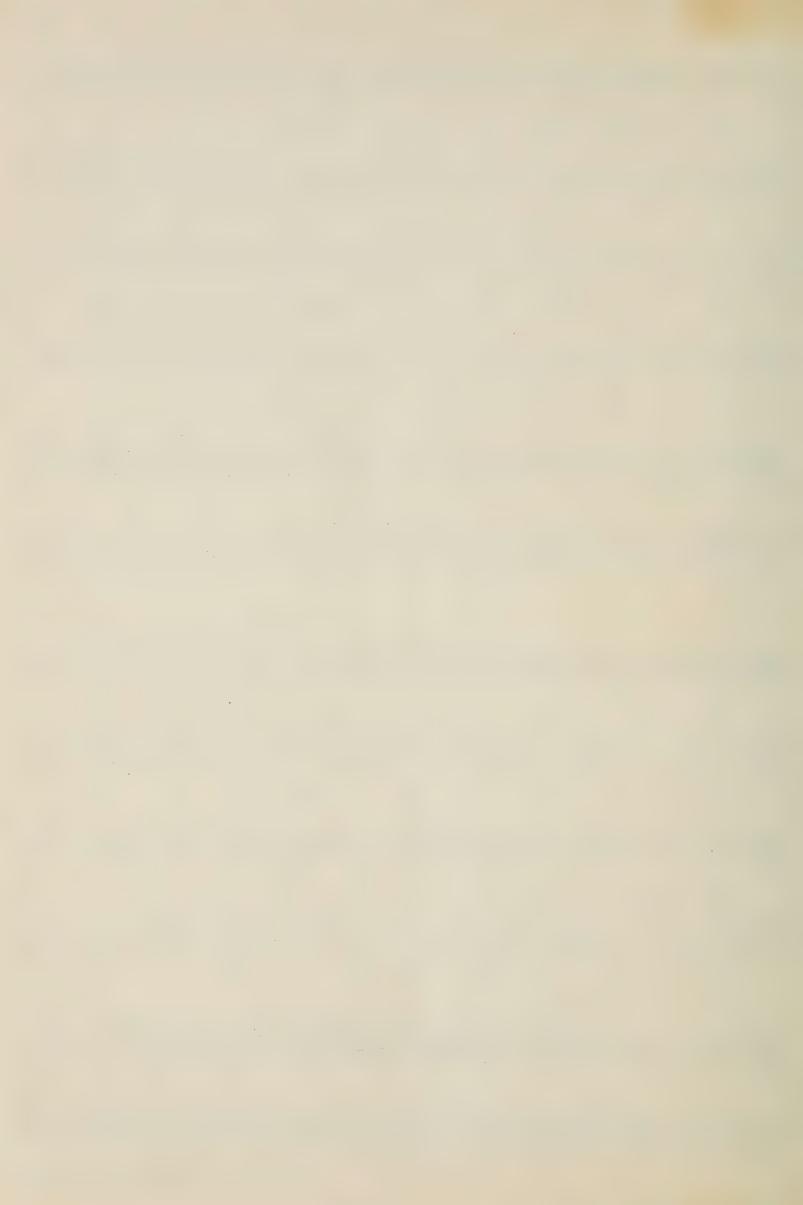








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